

Arts

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Blair fury at Lords revolt

Sven MacAlister, Chief
Political Correspondent

THE Government will fight to salvage its European election bill today after the peers inflicted a rare fourth defeat in the biggest Commons-Lords battle for decades.

With only days left before Parliament rises, the Government is in danger of losing its bill.

The bill will push the bill through the Commons again this afternoon and plans to send it back to the Lords in the early evening, during the peers' debate.

A Downing Street spokesman, describing the behaviour of the Lords as an affront to democracy, expressed its commitment to getting its legislation through: "We are not going to blink on this one."

The bill will fail if the peers do not accept it before the prorogation of Parliament, scheduled for Thursday or Friday. Government sources hinted at keeping Parliament sitting over the weekend if necessary.

If that fails, the Government will be forced to reintroduce it on Tuesday in the Queen's Speech and invoke the Parliament Act, which gives the Commons legislative precedence over the Lords, for the first time in half a century.

The Conservative leader, William Hague, showed no sign of backing down, claiming it was an issue of principle, and accusing Labour of introducing a closed electoral system for reasons of internal party discipline. He said the defeat was "a victory for common sense and democracy".

A combination of Tory and hereditary peers, and cross-benchers, defeated the Government by 361 to 198. Omnibus for the Government, the defeat was by an even greater margin than the previous vote last Thursday.

The Government, planning to abolish the voting rights of hereditary peers next year, said that without the help of 132 hereditary peers, the Conservatives would have lost.

Tony Blair's official spokesman said: "The Prime Minister sees it as an affront to democracy that the Tories with a four-to-one in-built majority in the House of Lords can overturn the Government

again and again in this way." He added: "Every time they do so they make the case for the reform of the Lords."

MPs and peers searched records for the last time the Lords had defeated the Commons four times in such a ping-pong tussle and could find nothing in the past 30 years.

The Conservatives, enjoying having the whip hand over the Government for a change, face a choice between giving in at the last moment or killing the bill.

Even if the Government brings it back in the Queen's Speech and invokes the Parliament Act, the Lords could delay the bill until the end of February, which would cast doubt over whether it will be possible to fight the European elections in June under proportional representation, as the Government had planned.

The peers voted again yesterday for an open list system, which the Conservatives argued gives power to the voters on individual choice of candidates rather than the closed list system, which hands power to the party machine. Downing Street said a list of names rather than parties would confuse voters.

The Lords was crowded for the debate, in which the Government fielded the former Prime Minister, Lord Callaghan. Although he is opposed to PR, he told the Conservatives "the time has come to stop playing games".

Lord Williams of Mostyn, the Home Office minister, winding up the debate, reminded peers that MPs had been elected while they had not. "This is now becoming a wholly improper abuse of power," he warned.

The Home Secretary, Jack Straw, described the vote as "a direct challenge to the democratic authority of the elected House of Commons. The issue is no longer about the best electoral system for the European parliament."

"It's about the right of unelected hereditary peers — accountable to no one but the Tory party — to frustrate the Government's programme."

Lord Mackay of Arduengish, the Conservative constitutional affairs spokesman in the Lords, who would up for the Opposition, said the Government could only get its legislation if it made substantial concessions. As the Government had refused any concessions, deadlock remained.



'The time has come to stop playing games'
Lord Callaghan, right



A meteor streaks through the California sky over the Mojave desert in this 30-minute exposure yesterday, which also captures stars moving across the sky. The Leonid meteor storm — particles hitting the atmosphere as Earth passes through debris of Comet Temple-Tuttle — was the greatest natural light display since the comet last passed in 1966. PHOTOGRAPH BY REED SAXON

Crash fears prompt third US rate cut

Forecast of sharp fall in UK growth undermines claims for economy

Alex Brummer
and Larry Elliott

AMERICA'S powerful central bank last night cut interest rates for the third time in seven weeks, amid fears that the global financial crisis could trigger recession and a Wall Street banking crash.

Despite the market rally over the past month, the Federal Reserve chairman, Alan Greenspan, warned that "unusual strains" remained in financial markets as he cut two US interest rates by 0.25 percentage points each.

The Fed announced that it was shaving 0.25 points off the Federal Funds rate to 4.75 per cent — designed to boost consumer spending and business investment — but also responded to pleas from the banking system to reduce the discount rate by a similar amount to 4.50 per cent.

Since the near-collapse of the Long Term Capital Management hedge fund, Mr Greenspan has been concerned about the safety of the US banking system, which has made heavy losses in the

markets turmoil. The cut in the discount rate allows banks to borrow more cheaply from the central bank if they face a cash shortage.

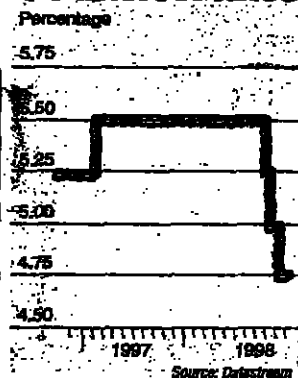
The Fed's move came as the West's leading think-tank, the Paris-based Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, predicted that growth in the rich industrialised countries would fall sharply in 1999 to 1.7 per cent.

Despite the Government's optimism about the growth prospects in Britain, the OECD said that the economy would expand by just 0.8 per cent next year and 1.5 per cent in 2000, well below the expectations of Gordon Brown, the Chancellor.

City analysts believe the Fed's action may make it easier for the Bank of England — which cut interest rates by 0.5 percentage points to 6.75 per cent two weeks ago — to lower rates again before Christmas. Figures out yesterday showed inflation in Britain in line with the Government's 2.5 per cent target, and price pressures diminishing in the high street as the effects of economic slowdown start to bite.

The OECD cautioned that

US interest rates



the authorities in the US and the Euro zone should cut the cost of borrowing, stressing that inflationary pressures were "considerably reduced or non-existent".

The decisive move by the American central bank — which has taken the lead in attempts by the Group Of Seven to ward off the threat of financial and economic collapse — prompted a sharp rally on Wall Street. The Dow Jones Industrial Average turned a 60-point loss ahead of the announcement into a 20-point gain within minutes, taking it above 9,000 points.

The Dow, which was trading at around 7,500 in mid-September, was up by around

70 points within an hour, despite Mr Greenspan's warning about "financial strains" in the system. Gains in equities were mirrored in the US bond market, seen as a key to restoring global confidence.

The latest interest-rate cut comes after one of the most turbulent 18-month periods in post-war economic history. The crisis triggered by a devaluation in Thailand in July last year has gradually spread to the rest of South-East Asia, Japan, Russia and Latin America.

Two separate rescue packages have been unveiled in the past week, with the International Monetary Fund putting together a \$41 billion bail-out for Brazil and the Japanese government a \$123 billion package of tax cuts and public spending designed to boost moribund demand.

In its statement the Fed said: "Although conditions in financial markets have settled down materially since mid-October, unusual strains remain. With the three-quarter point decline in Federal Funds rate since September, financial conditions can reasonably be expected to be consistent with fostering sustained economic expansion while keeping inflationary pressures subdued."

David Berenson, chief economist of the US mortgage insti-

tution Fannie Mae, said last night: "We thought they would ease. I am surprised that they cut the discount rate as well. It is more of a signal they are concerned about the world financial situation."

In its half-yearly health check on the global economy, the OECD said that American growth would fall from 3.5 per

cent this year to 1.5 per cent in 1999. Expansion across all 28 member nations would fall from 2.2 per cent to 1.7 per cent, with even the massive reflationary packages failing to lift the Japanese economy out of its recent slump.

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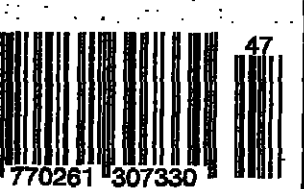
A former Radio 1 DJ admitted had been a child prostitute when he appeared in court last night in connection with a paedophile network. Page 2

International

The arrested Kurdish guerrilla chief was last night at the centre of a passionate international legal and diplomatic contest. Page 6

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In G2 EUROPE today: what to do when you hate your kids' friends — and their parents...

+ Francis Wheen, Britain's most irreverent columnist + Michael Billington on Stephen Rea + Society with 3 pages of jobs

Sketch

Just get me home, West Country road



Simon Hoggart

WHY DO British roads have no romance? No one has ever written a song called 'Get My Kicks on the A303'.

The French have the Autoroute de l'Est. US 1 may be the most beautiful road in the world, seeming to fly over cliffs past the sun-sodden surf of the California coastline.

On B2, the main east coast highway, you can crash into a moose near the Canadian border and be mugged by a Miami junkie 1,500 miles south, all on the same road.

Yesterday the Commons discussed the A303. This is the road that goes to my mother-in-law's house, so it obviously has a special importance for me ("I get my glee 'On the A303'").

But there is a resonance to the names along this highway. Winterbourne Stoke, Long Sutton, Overwallop, Kings Somborne, Coombe Bisset, Sedgemoor. What could be more mellifluous?

There are names that sound as if they should belong to something else, such as Othry. "What's your village like?" "Well, it's a bit, you know, sort of other."

There's George Nympton, famous for his character roles as policemen in so many British films of the early 1950s. Most of all there is Stonehenge which, even though it has now been rebranded as part of the Englandland Theme Park, is still heart-stopping when you round the corner and see it there.

So the A303 is a road, a sweet Celtic labourer dragging the stones with hide ropes the last mile on their ancient journey; it's peasants with jugs of cider, resting against hayricks under the summer sun, church bells ringing across water meadows. It's a positive pleasure to be stuck behind a time-spewing lorry if you know that

Melby Abbas is a few short miles away.

None of this magic has affected the junior transport minister, Glenda Jackson. To her, the A303 is not the Highway of History, but part of the "corridor study". "We are committed to improvement and the bypass at Winterbourne Stoke. The strategic role of the A303 will also be considered as part of the corridor study."

David Heath, a Liberal Democrat MP who has the good fortune to have the A303 run through his constituency, tried, somewhat plaintively, to stand against this tide of jargon. Wouldn't a wider road save lives as well as time?

Ms Jackson wasn't finished. The A303, she said, "is part of a major, multi-modal study". (This appears to mean trains as well as roads.)

Angela Browning of Tiverton envisaged a new Sedgemoor. "There will be mayhem among people who want to go to the West Country while the stretch of the A303 near the A303 is being dualled."

Clearly a job for the Territorial Army, which is, however, to be reduced. The Defence Secretary, George Robertson, announced the news to a critical House.

Lindsay Hoyle, the MP for Chorley, was upset because a TA centre in Chorley was to be cut. "This is a black day for Chorley," he said. Howard

Stoute, the MP for Dartford, thought it was a black day for Dartford — you will have guessed — the same reason.

Gerald Howarth, the MP for Aldershot, thought it was a black day for the Parachute Regiment, since it was losing one of its battalions, based — of course — in Aldershot. Contrariwise, Hugh Bayley of York, thought it was a pretty good day for York, which was getting the Royal Army Medical Corps.

As military strategists go, these chaps leave me the reputation of Clausewitz pretty much undisturbed.

Over in the Lords, the peers decided to defy the Commons over the European elections bill. This is a bit like the Winter Palace deciding to storm the mob. In fact it was all terribly anticlimactic and unexciting. The result was read out, and next business began.

Review

March to the music of mime

Andrew Romney

The Wedding March

London Film Festival

MOST film buffs are used to the image of legendary star Fay Wray as a half-clad blonde entwined in the fist of a giant gorilla.

But at Sadlers Wells a London Film Festival audience got to see the veteran Hollywood actress in two less familiar roles — on screen, as the romantic lead in a 1928 melodrama, and in person, as an impressively sturdy 91-year-old clearly enjoying the rapturous applause.

Miss Wray appeared on stage to introduce this year's Channel 4 Silents restoration, Erich von Stroheim's *The Wedding March*.

She only implicitly alluded to the film that made her a legend — the ape adventure *King Kong* — when she referred to *The Wedding March* as "my favourite film, no matter what you might think otherwise".

Joking about initial microphone problems ("Thank you for listening intently"), Miss Wray reminisced about her days as a budding starlet for Universal Studios — "Universal meant getting up in the morning and going out to sagebrush country to look at cowboys, and having the sun in your eyes so bright you couldn't see anything."

Her big break came, she said, when she was chosen to play the female lead in *The Wedding March* by von Stroheim, one of silent Hollywood's most notorious perfectionists. He was, she said, "a real genius of a director... I never had anyone else to compare with him. When you have details built with judgment

and strength and understanding, they grow into something remarkable."

"Feed with me what it was like to leave a working situation where you were uncomfortable and you didn't look nice on screen. I went to work with Erich von Stroheim — suddenly I was beautiful."

Silent film historian Kevin Brownlow, introducing *The Wedding March*, said that film buffs were divided on its merit. But the film, shown in von Stroheim's preferred cut — and with its colour sequences intact for the first time since 1928 — still managed to stir the house.

Von Stroheim himself plays the spoilt cavalry officer engaged for money to the daughter (Zsuzsa Pits) of a corn-plaster magnate, but in love with doe-eyed ingenue Miltz (Wray). Cynicism, a supernatural apparition, and Miltz's boorish savior intervene to thwart the course of true love.

Narratively, the film may be a little floppy compared with von Stroheim classics such as *Greed* or *Queen Kelly*. But the epic scale of the conception — the elaborate sets include a reconstruction of St Stephen's Cathedral — together with von Stroheim's eye for grotesque caricature, still make it compelling.

As usual with Channel 4 Silents, Carl Davis conducted his own score to the film, based this time on the Viennese masters. The visuals gave him full scope for waltzes, military marches, and galumphing tuba parts to accompany the bickering couples.

The audience lapped it up. And Fay Wray lapped them up. "Gee whizz," she said to a rapturous house, "you're worth it!"

This review appeared in some editions yesterday.

Leaked internal documents show leading company's concern over 'skyrocketing' public opposition

Genetic food facing crisis

John Vidal and David Hencke

MONSANTO, the world's leading genetic food company, is facing public melt-down in Britain and Germany with a "society-wide" collapse of support for its radical technologies, according to leaked internal documents.

Amid deepening media problems, and resentment by supermarkets, only senior civil servants and (mostly Labour) MPs have shown growing support for Monsanto's controversial technologies in the past year.

Two internal documents, leaked to Greenpeace and con-

firmed by Monsanto last night as genuine, say that the company should now consider crisis management. A company spokesman said Monsanto "was not at the moment considering pulling out" of either country, but that it was concerned at the situation.

While many independent polls have shown the British public to be wary of the introduction of genetically-modified foods, this is the first internal company analysis to have been made public. Monsanto's latest polls and focus groups, according to documents, show that an earlier collapse of support for GM foods has now accelerated with public opposition "skyrocketing", despite a £1 million advertising campaign.

"At each point we keep thinking that we have reached the low point... but we apparently have not," writes the author of the papers, Stan Greenberg, a US poll adviser who has worked for President Clinton, Tony Blair and German Chancellor Gerhard Schröder.

Monsanto's strategy in Britain is shown to have been to try to persuade "a socio-economic elite" of the benefits of the technology, so that they would in turn lead others into accepting foods with GM ingredients. The only progress it says it has made in the past year is with the political elite, "upper-level civil servants and MPs", many of whom it is known to have met.

Media reporting on bio-

technology has been particularly difficult in Britain," says Greenberg, "with key papers and reporters waging a campaign on GM foods."

Greenberg recommends the company should prepare for a crisis in Germany, where Monsanto says support for GM foods is lower than anywhere else in Europe.

Daniel Verakis of Monsanto in London said last night: "This information is not new or different to what has already been said." In a further development, the Ministry of Agriculture has bowed to pressure from the biotechnology industry and abandoned plans to insist on full-scale crop trials for genetically modified crops. New regulations being

rushed through Parliament halve the number of trials needed to test new plant and seed varieties — drastically cutting the amount of information collected by the ministry before the crops can go on sale to the public.

The regulations follow the threat of legal action from the industry — and are contrary to the Government's original intention to regulate new varieties. Objections to government plans have been lodged by the National Farmers Union, the Country Landowners Association, the Lincolnshire Seed Growers' Association and Friends of the Earth. But Lord Donoughue, parliamentary under-secretary at MAFF, has overruled complaints by tabling the regulations.

The Liberal Democrats are to try and block the changes — and objections to the Government's new regulations are to be tabled by Norman Baker, Liberal Democrat MP for Lewes. Mr Baker said yesterday: "There is a case for more tests on new genetically modified seeds, not fewer."

The new rules abolish the need for seed trials to be replicated — causing concern in the NFU that new varieties could be grown in Britain based on foreign trials. Pete Riley, food campaigner for Friends of the Earth, said: "Genetic engineering is a new and still unpredictable technology. To have the amount of data needed is not only weak but in total contempt of public concern."

Ex-Radio 1 DJ was child prostitute

Kate Connolly in Prague

A FORMER Radio 1 DJ yesterday admitted he had been a child prostitute when he appeared in a Prague court accused of masterminding a paedophile network and sexually abusing boys as young as 10.

In a statement to the court, Chris Denning, aged 57, one of the original line-up when Radio 1 began broadcasting in 1967, said he had been an "occasional male prostitute" between the ages of 14 and 18 — an experience that had helped him befriend young male prostitutes in Prague's gay nightclubs.

Denning is on trial with two Frenchmen and an American. The men allegedly shared boys aged between 10 and 18 for sex sessions.

Denning, who has spent the past year in custody in Pankrac prison in Prague, is charged with sexual abuse and corrupting the morals of children. According to police, he lured boys from video arcades and nightspots with promises of gifts and money. He allegedly took them to his Prague flat where he fondled them and had sex, capturing the events on film.

A search of his flat following his arrest in November last year revealed video cameras, pornographic photographs, and equipment for spreading pornography on the Internet. He convicted Denning, who ran a music and video company from his home in Bracknell, Berkshire, faces up to eight years in jail.

The former DJ, who denied the charges, recounted his battle from the age of five to come to terms with his homosexuality. He told Judge Viktor Mach he had spent more than £10,000 on daily trips to a psychoanalyst for five years in the 1970s.

Despite this, he still had problems with the police in

England," he said, referring to a 10-week jail term he received in February 1996 for possessing pornography.

"I've been homosexual for as long as I can remember," he said. "Since I was an adult my interest has been in people from 15-17. This was very difficult at times because it was totally illegal in Britain for a long time. From the age of 14 to 18 I was myself an occasional male prostitute."

This experience had enabled him easily to befriend young male prostitutes in Prague's gay nightclubs.

"The boys were very interested in my history. They asked me how much I had earned. They treated me as if I was one of them, which I enjoyed," he said.

"It reminded me of my own youth and of clubs I used to go to in London. There were dozens of men and boys sitting together being openly affectionate with each other. The atmosphere wasn't sordid, it felt like a social club. One boy regularly took his money."

He said that he gave the boys money to play video games and buy drinks, but not for sex.

He added that for the past six years he had been unable to have intercourse because of diabetes. But he admitted having "a kind of sex, mainly cuddling and fondling" with three boys under 15 years old who had become very close friends. He had not realised they were lying about their ages, he said. "I now know they did that so that they didn't lose business." Although he gave them presents, he told the court, he did not pay them for sex.

"I was under a great deal of pressure in his relationship with the boys came from them. 'To have a man friend was a kind of status thing. A lot of these children come from broken homes with no father and have low self-esteem.'"

Sailors' PR voyage sinks under tide of mutiny

Terry Macalister

THE Global Mariner was to have been the pride of the trade union movement, roaming the high seas to warn sailors about the perils of working for evil shipowners.

But the exhibition vessel's odyssey has turned into a public relations nightmare, with tales of fighting, drunkenness and mutiny.

And to cap it all the crew (the workers) are taking on their bosses in the International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF), accusing them of unfair dismissal and running a sub-standard ship.

The trouble began in Bremen where there were threats of strikes when the rebellious crew took exception to working conditions.

It continued in London at a glitzy send-off by the shipping minister, Glenda Jackson. Guests complained they had seen crew members leaving the vessel carrying six-packs of beer.

Over the next few weeks one

third of the crew was replaced for misdemeanours including fighting, drunkenness and poor discipline. The sacked seafarers have launched an unfair dismissal suit.

The ITF now finds itself locked in dispute with its own affiliates. The ratings' union, RMT, and the officers' union, Numbat, are representing sacked crew members. Lawyers are also involved.

William Clayton, of the Manchester law firm Birchall Blackburn, said his client, Anthony Lloyd, had been sacked by the ITF two days after a trade union meeting on the ship raised safety issues.

"The conditions on board the vessel were totally unacceptable. There were health and safety problems on the ship. My client was unfairly dismissed for union activities," Mr Clayton said.

Mark Dickinson, assistant general secretary of the ITF, admitted there had been problems with "a high turnover of staff" but said he was happy with the current crew.

"The ITF is committed to run-



Chris Denning is led into court yesterday, accused of masterminding a paedophile network

PHOTOGRAPH: JULIE DENESHA

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MEPs force showdown over fraud

'We voted in the full knowledge that it could mean the end of the commissioners' careers, not just in Europe, but with this cloud of incompetence and fraud hanging over them, in their domestic futures as well'

German MEP

Martin Walker in Strasbourg

SCANDALS of fraud and mismanagement in Brussels last night triggered a historic clash of power, as the European Parliament moved to sack the entire European Commission and bar its members from holding office again.

German conservatives voted to lead the revolt in the European Parliament in protest at the burgeoning scandals of bureaucratic bungling that are engulfing the Commission.

A joint meeting of the 47 German Christian Democrat and Social Christian MEPs last night agreed unanimously that "the scandals

have gone too far — we cannot permit Europe to go on being run like this".

They sent a delegation to warn Jacques Santer, president of the Commission and a fellow Christian Democrat, that unless he announced "a full-scale reform and clean-up" by December 1, his political career and those of his fellow commissioners — who include Neil Kinnock — would be over.

The German decision is sure to attract support from the rest of the parliament's conservatives. And with Green and nationalist and some leftwing MEPs last night being recruited to join the campaign, the stage is set for a historic display of the parliament's authority.

The constitutional mechanism that will be used is the parliament's right to approve the European Union's £80 billion budget, stating that the taxpayers' money has been properly spent. The Greens, outraged by the waste and failure of the £60 million EU effort to clean up nuclear power stations in the former Soviet bloc, joined in the threat to refuse a discharge on the budget.

Such a refusal is stronger than a vote of no confidence in the Commission, now that the Amsterdam treaty gives the parliament the right to approve or block the next commission. Sometimes described as the parliament's nuclear weapon, the refusal would declare a civil war between EU institutions.

"We took this vote in the

full knowledge that it could mean the end of the careers of the commissioners, not just in Europe, but with this cloud of fraud and incompetence hanging over them, over their domestic futures as well," a senior German MEP told the Guardian last night.

The move came hours after Europe's Court of Auditors delivered a devastating report on fraud, waste and mismanagement in the EU's annual budget. It said some £3 billion had been misused by the Commission and that waste and maladministration were rampant. Billions of pounds had gone adrift in commission accounts, with the court reporting that the Commission had understated its financial obligations by £3.3 billion, and was so lax in

its accounts that it had not noticed its banks were not paying it interest.

"The administration of community finances is still influenced by a spending culture. Far too often the institutions measure the success of a policy by the amount spent, rather than the result achieved," the court said.

The conservative strike at the Commission puts Europe's socialist parties on the spot. If they try to get the budget approved they will be defending the indefensible after the court report. If they join the conservatives they will be condemning allies including Mr Kinnock, Finland's budget commissioner, Rikki Iikkanen, and Italy's humanitarian affairs commissioner, Emma Bonino.

Politics lie behind the clash. German, British, Italian and Spanish conservatives have agreed a common strategy to win control of parliament in next year's elections. What the conservatives needed was an issue, and with the auditors' report they believe they have found it.

The Commission yesterday made a series of pledges to reform its accounting systems and make its financial management more transparent and accountable. But MEPs from all parties agreed that the promises did not go far enough. They had heard similar pledges before, and the system required fundamental change.

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'Administration of community finances is still influenced by a spending culture. Far too often the institutions measure the success of a policy by the amount spent, rather than the result achieved'

Court of Auditors

The way we war: Kennedys fall out with Streisands

Michael Ellison in New York

TWO of America's great liberal families, the Kennedys and Streisands — long united through their support of the Democratic Party — have fallen out after ignoring one of life's great maxims: never do business with friends.

Close as they may have been, they have been parted by money, and a sum that would barely have bought a diamond to adorn the neck of the Kennedy family.

Now, says Jackie's child, the estranged Barbara Streisand, brother Sheldon of cheating them out of half their money in a real estate deal, is a real estate mogul.

John F. Kennedy Jr., the son of the president, is the father of the Kennedy family's fortune. His sister, Caroline, is the mother of the Kennedy family's fortune. His sister, Caroline, is the mother of the Kennedy family's fortune.

Mr Streisand says the siblings have no legal standing in the case because they are not related. His lawyer, John F. Kennedy Jr., the son of the president, is the father of the Kennedy family's fortune.

But that does not mean that the man regularly described in tabloid gossip columns as "the sexiest man alive" has been content to

Streisand, however, she was his wife.

The Kennedys say she was allowed to buy her stake for \$500,000, a "bargain price". The court papers say that by engaging in "the rank form of self-dealing" Mr Streisand divided the Kennedy interest in the partnership from 99 per cent to 49 per cent.

The real estate mogul had "engaged in a pattern of self-dealing and deceitful concealment in an effort to steal the economic value of the partnership", the papers say. The Kennedys want Mr Streisand and his company removed as partners.

Mr Streisand says the siblings have no legal standing in the case because they are not related. His lawyer, John F. Kennedy Jr., the son of the president, is the father of the Kennedy family's fortune.

But that does not mean that the man regularly described in tabloid gossip columns as "the sexiest man alive" has been content to



John F. Kennedy Jr. ... says he was a victim of 'blatant self-dealing'



Barbra Streisand ... her brother Sheldon is accused of cheating the Kennedys

Rising son

INEVITABLY, 38-year-old John F. Kennedy Jr. has lived his life in the long shadow of his father, the president assassinated in Dallas in 1963.

But that does not mean that the man regularly described in tabloid gossip columns as "the sexiest man alive" has been content to

idle in the slow lane of life as a member of America's first family of politics.

There is constant speculation that he is about to enter the political arena which claimed his father and his uncle Robert, but instead he has spent recent years building up his politics and personality magazine

George. The magazine, co-founded with his friend Michael Berman, a marketing executive, was made possible by \$25 million backing from French-owned Hachette Filipacchi.

His sister Caroline is an author who is said to be more interested in motherhood than a career.

Money girl

FAME claimed Barbara Streisand in 1962 when, as a 20-year-old, she conquered Broadway with her role in I Can Get It For You Wholesale and released her first album, Pins and Needles.

But it was *Funny Girl*, the show with which she has been associated ever since, that put her in a different

league two years later. By 1968 William Wyler's movie version had made her an Oscar-winning star.

Other films include *Hello Dolly!*, *A Star is Born*, *Yentl*, *The Mirror* and *The Prince of Tides*. By the 1990s she was giving shows in Las Vegas at a reported \$6 million a night and was there-

fore well placed to donate her \$15 million, 24-acre estate in California to the Santa Monica Mountains Conservatory.

She has countered criticism of her alleged taste for megalomania by saying that healthy ambition in men is seen as unattractive pushiness in women.

Foreign Office sought help of arms-to-Africa security company after Angola attack

continued from page 1

ing it an offence for Britons to be recruited in foreign-based armies.

Mr Spicer was contacted by FO officials about the fate of missing British citizens in Angola, the foreign affairs select committee heard. "Mr Spicer is in touch with the (Foreign) Office," a spokesman said.

He said the FO had also liaised with Lt Col Spicer to ensure that the families of those killed "were aware of the details" before their names were released to the press.

David Routledge, from Berkshire, and Alan Thomas, from West Yorkshire, were killed in the attack last month, and Jason Pope, from Devon, was

abducted. They were working for DiamondWorks, in which Tony Buckingham, a former SAS soldier and founder of Sandline, has interests.

"Spicer was nominated by DiamondWorks to represent the company in discussions with the FO," an FO spokesman said. In evidence to the Commons committee earlier this month, Lt Col Spicer de-

scribed Mr Buckingham as Sandline's "patron".

The FO said the two other contacts with Lt Col Spicer — in July and September — were authorised by Robin Cook. The meetings were conducted in a "properly controlled environment", Sir John insisted.

Lt Col Spicer last night responded angrily to the disclosure. He said he requested a meeting in September "to discuss whether a licence might be granted under the sanctions order relating to Yugoslavia in order to enable Sandline to assist the people of Kosovo".

He described Sir John's disclosure as a "flagrant breach of the Foreign Office's duty of confidentiality". It was "ex-

traordinarily irresponsible", Lt Col Spicer added, publicly to refer to his passing on information about people held hostage in Angola when efforts to secure their release were still in progress.

It is believed the rumours passed on by Lt Col Spicer related to reports that a body had been found which might have been one of the abducted

diamond workers. The FO later denied the rumours.

Although British-based private security companies have operated in Angola in the past, Sandline was not one of them.

Questioned for more than three hours by MPs, Sir John described briefings for FO ministers Tony Lloyd and Baroness Symons for parliamentary debates before the

scandal over the supply of arms to Sierra Leone broke out as a "dog's dinner".

FO officials had been given "new instructions on how to take parliamentary business seriously", he said.

In a reference to information supplied by the Defence Intelligence Staff, he told MPs: "The whole of Whitehall dozed on that stuff".

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DELL



Winners and losers: running in the London Marathon can damage your skeleton, say the experts, while tennis and squash are good for toughening bones
PHOTOGRAPH BY: TOM JENKINS



Too much exercise can seriously damage your bones, doctors warn

Vivek Chaudhary
Sports Correspondent

EXERCISE might be good for the heart and lungs but it can seriously damage your bones, causing problems in old age, delegates at a conference on the impact of exercise on the human skeleton heard yesterday.

Runners and those who regularly attend aerobic classes

are in greatest danger but cricketers, dancers and even army recruits could be putting their bones at risk in the pursuit of supreme fitness. Squash and tennis were identified as the best sports to play to increase bone strength.

Delegates were told that although some form of exercise is good for the body, too much can cause weak bones — particularly when athletes stop training or reach old age. Ath-

letes were warned that they only had until the age of 18 or 19 to strengthen their bones before they started becoming weaker with time. Sports medicine experts heard that while attention was paid to the positive effects of exercise on the heart and lungs, not enough consideration was given to the impact intense exercise could have on bones. Athletes were warned that, particularly be-

yond adolescence, the emphasis should be on the quality and not quantity of training. Women athletes — particularly long distance runners and gymnasts who trained intensely and restricted their diet, are among those at greatest risk of weakening their bones and suffering irregular periods.

Roslyn Carbon, of the sports medicine department at the Royal London hospital,

found that female athletes who trained to high levels, or young women who attended aerobic or dance classes too frequently, also suffered from higher rates of stress fractures of their bones and ran the risk of osteoporosis in later life.

The conference heard from Ilkka Vuori, from a sports medicine institute in Finland, who tested women athletes of various ages and women who

did not exercise. He found that while regular exercise at a younger age could have a positive impact on bones and make them stronger, continued, intense exercise could have a detrimental effect. Dr Vuori also found that those women who did not exercise at all had much weaker bones, with lower levels of calcium than those who did.

But he added: "Squash is very good for strengthening

bones because it's fast and there's lots of movement of the body." The conference also heard that research in Australia had shown that cricketers who bowled using different styles were more likely to suffer from bone fractures than those who stuck to the same style.

Michael Horton, head of the University College of London's bone centre and orga-

niser of the conference, said that people needed to strike a balance between the amount of exercise they did to ensure that they were not damaging their bones. He said: "The Government keeps saying that young people should do lots of exercise. It may have a benefit for while but no one has thought what the end result is going to be when these young people reach the age of 50."

Flatmate throttled judo expert to get money for gambling

Stuart Miller

A JUDO expert was strangled to death with her own black belt by a fellow enthusiast after she refused to give him £20 to buy cigarettes.

Richard Roberts, aged 34, was yesterday jailed for life for the murder of Beverley Price, an amateur judo instructor who had been on the brink of selection for the British Olympic team.

Roberts, a brown belt who fought in a heavier weight class to Ms Price, told the court he had hurt her "because she hurt me. It was pure anger".

After the murder, Roberts, who has been addicted to fruit

machines since the age of 11, used Ms Price's credit card to withdraw £400 which he then lost in gambling. Worcester crown court heard that Roberts was a member of the Samuraji Judo Club in Kidderminster, Hereford and Worcester, where Ms Price was an instructor. He had moved in to her flat in Worcester after his parents threw him out of home because he had spent huge sums on his addiction.

Roger Smith, QC, prosecuting, told the jury that Roberts "sponged off" Ms Price, who was described as "warm-hearted and generous". A keen amateur footballer with Hereford United Ladies, she also helped out at a church youth club in Worcester. On the night of the murder,

Roberts asked for cigarette money but Ms Price, an anti-smoker, refused and questioned him about £260 he had had from his former employers. He called her a "stingy cow" and the argument deteriorated into violence.

Roberts pushed her and she responded by kicking him in the groin. As she attempted to flee upstairs, he grabbed her by the hair and they tumbled down together. He then wound the black belt from her neck and used his elbows as levers to throttle her.

"I knew each other's capabilities, but if it was sheer power she was no match for his greater strength," Mr Smith said. Ms Price's mother, Jean, found her daughter's body

two days later after she failed to appear for her job as a telecommunications engineer with Midlands Electricity. When Roberts returned to the flat, after losing £400 on fruit machines, to find it cordoned off by police, he told officers: "There's a dead body in there. I killed Beverley in there."

In court, the former scout master said he now felt guilt, shame and sorrow at his actions, but denied murder. At the time of the killing, he had been depressed over losing his job at a fencing firm and embarrassed by his gambling addiction.

But sentencing Roberts yesterday, Mr Justice Sachs said: "You have taken the life of somebody who would still be alive and that is a terrible, terrible thing."

Outside the court, Ms Price's parents welcomed the verdict. Her father, Trevor, said: "He has killed my daughter — no one could hurt me as much as he has. The whole family is shattered and devastated."

"Beverley was a very talented girl but she never used to flaunt it. She meant the world to us. I just hope she can rest in peace."

The Samuraji Judo Club also paid a tribute to Ms Price. "She was a wonderful coach to the children," a spokesman said. "She put her heart and soul into everything she did."

"She was dedicated to the sport and she would definitely have been in the British squad for the Sydney Olympics."

Beverley Price: generous and dedicated to her sport

'Glass floor' hits women graduates

John Carvel
Education Editor

WOMEN graduates encounter more difficulty than men in getting their first job, according to research commissioned by the Guardian which suggests that the glass ceiling restricting the promotion of women may be accompanied by a glass floor obstructing access to the first rung of the ladder.

Among the class of '98 — graduates leaving universities this summer — men got more job interviews, more job offers and expected to earn £1,500 a year more than their female contemporaries.

"It seems that discrimination affects women early in the job hunting process — immediately on leaving university," said Grad Facts '98, the fourth Guardian survey of graduates' careers and employment expectations.

Finding research by NOP — including a questionnaire survey of more than 2,000 final year students — showed that men and women started applying for jobs at the same time, but the women were less likely to get an interview.

On average women had to make five applications for every interview, whereas men needed to make only four. By the time they left university, 49 per cent of the men had job offers, compared with 42 per cent of the women.

The survey found women graduates had substantially lower expectations when it came to starting salaries. Only 15 per cent expected to earn £16,000 or more, compared with 31 per cent of men. Only 9 per cent expected to earn more than £17,000, compared with 21 per cent of men. And 2 per cent expected more

than £20,000, compared with 5 per cent of men.

On average graduates expected their starting salary to be £14,097, rising to £22,157 after five years. Women's expectations were £1,500 below men's at the start of their careers. After five years they expected to average £20,529, compared with £23,648 for men. Men were twice as likely to expect to be earning more than £25,000 by that stage in their careers.

The research did not explain why employers might be discriminating against women, despite trends showing men and boys trailing at almost every level of academic achievement and a popular perception that women graduates are more mature and better socialised for the world of work.

The results also ran counter to evidence presented last month to the Institute of Personnel and Development that men were facing more problems than women in the long term job market.

But Simon Howard, chairman of Park Human Resources, said the outlook for women had improved: "Much has been made of the glass ceiling for women in senior management positions, but I would argue that it is not so much a glass ceiling as a glass escalator."

"Male under-performance in education used to be balanced by social and economic factors which saw females withdrawing earlier from education. Employers therefore had more men than women to choose from. However, even before the graduate output evened up, in 1996 employers recruited more females than males, and there seems nothing to suggest that these long term trends are going to change," he said.

British yachswoman dies in Pacific storm

Stuart Miller

A BRITISH woman has been swept to her death after a four day battle against mountainous seas in the South Pacific as she sailed around the world with her husband.

Anita Dean's 3½ year voyage with her husband, Roger, ended in tragedy five miles off New Zealand on Monday morning (local time), police said yesterday.

The body of Mrs Dean, aged 52, who suffered from multiple sclerosis, was found at Great Exhibition Bay on the remote northern coast of North Island.

Mr Dean, aged 53, was found by rescuers still clinging to their 18-ton, 52ft yacht, Woody Goose, after it was swept on to a beach notorious



Roger Dean... found clinging to stranded yacht

wearing a safety harness. When he looked again, the device was empty.

The couple, both experienced sailors from Hull, on Humberside, had been approaching the end of a 1,000 mile voyage from Fiji which had been dogged by terrible weather.

For four days, they fought to remain afloat in heavy seas whipped up by 30 knot southeasterly winds. As exhaustion set in they dropped anchor to get some sleep five miles from the relative safety of Houtora harbour.

But they overslept and woke to find they were drifting dangerously close to the beach.

Unable to start their diesel engine they fired two distress flares, which were spotted by local residents. With the engine still failing to start, the

yacht was eventually dashed on to the shore.

Emergency services found the yacht and Mr Dean, exhausted but uninjured, an hour later.

The body of Mrs Dean was recovered less than a mile to the north.

Southcoast police have launched an inquiry, but are treating the death as an accident.

Officers were at the scene yesterday examining the yacht to determine what went wrong.



The stranded Woody Goose, from which Anita Dean was swept to her death

Jailed serial killer admits 1970s petrol station murder

Duncan Campbell
Crime Correspondent

POLICE yesterday confirmed they were investigating claims by a convicted serial murderer that he was responsible for the killing of a petrol station attendant nearly 20 years ago.

A report on the claims is being prepared for the Crown Prosecution Service.

Bruce Childs, aged 62, is already serving life sentences for six murders. He claims responsibility for five other killings over 30 years. Childs, a contract killer, has indicated he has information about other murders.

The murder being reinvestigated is that of Gordon Snowden who was battered to death, aged 60, at a petrol station in Sutton Bridge, Lincolnshire, in April 1979.

Childs told Jeff Edwards, a Mirror reporter, that he killed Mr Snowden because he feared the man might be able to identify him.

"I battered him to death with a cash in his office and took the till to make it look like a robbery," Childs said. "He was an old boy and when I look back I'm sorry, but in those days I was ruthless about eliminating risks."

Yesterday, a Scotland Yard spokeswoman said that the Metropolitan police had inter-

viewed a man in his sixties about the claims.

A spokesman for Lincolnshire police confirmed that Childs had been interviewed several times and would be interviewed again.

Police who interviewed Childs at Durham's Frankland prison are understood to be sceptical about his other murder claims, including the killing of an inmate at a Kent hospital in the 1960s — where no such murder took place.

Childs was convicted of six murders in the 1970s, including those of George Brett and his 10-year-old son Terry, who were killed with a sub-machine gun at an Ilford factory.

Childs said he had been given £1,800 to kill George Brett. The boy was killed because he happened to be there with his father.

Harry "Big H" McKenny and Terry Pinfold were convicted of the murders with Childs. Pinfold said yesterday, from Kent's Swaleside jail, that he hoped that Childs's claims would be relevant to his own case now with the Criminal Cases Review Commission.

At his trial Childs denied killing a former girlfriend, Joan Priscilla Brown, who had disappeared.

She has not been the subject of a police inquiry as to whether she was the victim of foul play.

New role for 'weekend warriors' in shake-up

Richard Norton-Taylor

A SWEEPING shake-up of the Territorial Army was announced yesterday to reshape the 80-year-old reserve force for a new role backing up regular troops in trouble spots and ending their "weekend warrior" image.

George Robertson, the Defence Secretary, yesterday announced the long-awaited blueprint on the future of the TA after a furious lobbying campaign on an issue which arouses deep feelings.

"A large proportion of the TA is currently roled towards military home defence against invasion — a scenario which we are unlikely to face in the foreseeable future," Mr Robertson said.

More TA units will be on higher states of readiness and, for the first time, could be compulsorily called out in crises that fall short of a "direct threat" to Britain, such as the Gulf war. The TA already provides 10 per cent of the 5,000 British troops in Bosnia.

A total of 87 TA centres, 35 per cent of the existing 455 around the country, will be closed, and infantry battal-

ions will be halved and yeomanry regiments will be amalgamated, but Mr Robertson insisted all existing "cap badge" affiliations will be preserved.

The TA will but be cut by 12,800 to 41,200 — a higher total than that forseen in last July's Strategic Defence Review. The cuts will trim £100 million from the defence budget, though General Sir Roger Wheeler, head of the army, insisted that they were decided on operational grounds alone.

Mr Robertson, who said the idea was to make the TA "more powerful, more relevant, and more useful", insisted it would not affect its ability to respond to civil emergencies, including any that might be caused by the breakdown in computers as a result of the millennium bug.

TA units, including yeomanry regiments, will also be able for the first time to train on modern equipment such as Challenger 2 battle tanks, AS90 heavy artillery, and Rapier air defence systems. The TA's medical services will be increased by 2,000 with the ability to set up four emergency field hospitals.

Two squadrons of TA yeomanry will be trained to meet the possibility of nuclear, biological and chemical threats to Britain. The two SAS regiments in the TA will be retained, as will TA units engaged in signals, logistics, and engineering. The number of TA bands will be reduced from 24 to 14.

The plans were attacked by MPs on both sides of the Commons for eroding links between TA and local communities and for diminishing the TA's role in the event of civil emergencies at a time when the US is strengthening its National Guard.

John Maples, the shadow defence secretary, said the issue was all about money. "The TA is our insurance policy against a national emergency. At a time when we have a very small regular army of just over 100,000, that reserve becomes even more important," he said.

Memories Campbell, Liberal Democrat defence spokesman, said the announcement would cause "great dismay" to those units being dismantled. "However it is described, the TA is to be reduced by one third, and 25 per cent of its drill halls will be sold off to developers," he said.

Passing sentence at Maidstone crown court, Judge David Griffiths told Walsley he was guilty of "a grave breach of trust" in abusing the patients, five of whom were indecently assaulted at the Lime Hill Road surgery, in Tunbridge Wells, Kent, where he practised until the trial, and three at the Yealdon health centre, near Leeds, where he worked from 1976 to 1996.

The judge continued: "An indecent assault on a young woman is a serious matter in any case but in your case the victims were all young and

Sarah Hall

A FAMILY doctor who indecently assaulted eight "young and vulnerable" women as they lay on his consulting couch was yesterday jailed for three and a half years.

Gerald Walsley, a 50-year-old married GP from Langton Green, Kent, was convicted of 10 charges of indecent assault on the eight women between 1990 and 1997. He was also placed indefinitely on the sex offenders' register, and faces being struck off by the General Medical Council and civil action from at least two of the women.

Passing sentence at Maidstone crown court, Judge David Griffiths told Walsley he was guilty of "a grave breach of trust" in abusing the patients, five of whom were indecently assaulted at the Lime Hill Road surgery, in Tunbridge Wells, Kent, where he practised until the trial, and three at the Yealdon health centre, near Leeds, where he worked from 1976 to 1996.

The judge continued: "An indecent assault on a young woman is a serious matter in any case but in your case the victims were all young and

vulnerable female patients. "From the evidence I have heard, you are a man who is of sound mind and sound character and many of your patients have spoken of you in glowing terms but, as one witness said, you crossed the line."

During the two-week trial, the court heard how Walsley — who has two adopted daughters and was described in court as "a perfect gentleman" — preyed on women who were young and attractive but had low self-esteem. Many of the assaults happened after the doctor offered "confidence boosting" messages which involved the women lying semi-dressed or naked on his consulting couch. Afterwards, he would say nothing — leaving his victims humiliated, incredulous and reluctant to complain because of the doctor-patient relationship.

One of his victims told how she was abused at the age of 21 after confessing that she believed she was a virgin. Walsley told her: "I will show you you are not," before massaging and masturbating her, and concluding: "There you go. I said there wasn't a problem."

Another was groped when she went to the doctor for treatment for post-natal depression. Her then 19-year-old sister was

indecently assaulted when she went for a smear test. Despite two women complaining to police in 1992, the GP was only charged last November, after a 24-year-old told police she had been assaulted twice. The seven other women then came forward after reports in the press.

Walsley, who consistently denied the charges, continued to work at the Tunbridge Wells practice until two weeks ago, and worked unattended by a chaperone until May this year.

West Kent Health Authority yesterday said it had no power to suspend the GP — whose wife, Yvonne, worked as a senior receptionist at the practice, just yards from the consulting room where five of the victims were assaulted.

After the case, Detective Sergeant Steve O'Keefe, who led the investigation, said: "There is no dispute that, to many patients, Dr Walsley was a caring and competent GP and that many people have cause to be grateful to him. However, that should not blind people to his cynical manipulation of vulnerable women. During the course of the trial the term 'silly little girls' was used to describe some of the victims. They are not silly little girls. They are brave women."

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Italy signals that rebel Kurd will not be extradited

Battle intensifies over Ocalan's fate

John Hooper in Rome and Chris Morris in Ankara

THE arrested Kurdish guerrilla chief, Abdullah Ocalan, was last night at the centre of a passionate international legal and diplomatic contest.

As supporters of Mr Ocalan's Kurdistan Workers' Party, the PKK, stepped up protests throughout Europe, Italy's new prime minister gave his clearest hint yet that the separatist leader would not be sent back to Turkey. In Turkey, however, the mood was rapidly turning from disbelief to outrage.

Mr Ocalan, who was arrested at Fiumicino airport near Rome last Thursday, is the driving force behind an independence struggle in which more than 29,000 people have been killed.

The latest death took place yesterday when a PKK suicide bomber blew herself up outside a police station in the town of Yüsekova in south-eastern Turkey. This followed the detention of 91 people in Diyarbakir on Monday night

when Turkish police raided a Kurdish party office. In Moscow, two Kurdish men were in hospital after dousing themselves with petrol and setting themselves ablaze outside the lower house of parliament.

German police said about 4,000 Kurds protested in Bonn. Similar numbers marched in Rome, where demonstrators remained camped outside the military hospital in which Mr Ocalan is believed to be held.

Italy's constitution does not allow extradition to countries that have the death penalty. But Ankara's parliament is expected to approve a law repealing capital punishment in the next few days, and the authorities have not given up hope that Mr Ocalan, who is on trial in his absence for capital offences, will be extradited.

"Italy is a civilised country," Turkey's president, Süleyman Demirel, said yesterday. "It cannot help a murderer who has spilled the blood of 30,000 people."

Since his arrest, Mr Ocalan has asked for political asylum

and on Monday he issued a statement renouncing violence. "I am ready to do my part to halt terrorism," he said. "I have come to Italy to create the conditions for a political solution."

Coming from a man who only three months ago renewed his pledge to a campaign of violent rebellion, Mr Ocalan's remarks were a surprise.

Italy's prime minister, Massimo D'Alema, told parliament yesterday that such a renunciation was the "indispensable, minimum condition" for asylum to be considered. But in an apparent sign that extradition had already been ruled out, he added that Rome's decision would "not be an act of hostility towards Turkey, but an act of respect for our laws, our history and our values".

Italy has a substantial trading relationship with Turkey, selling three times as much as it buys. Now Turkish business groups are organising boycotts of Italian products.

Rome also depends on Ankara to check the flow of illegal migrants into Italy.



Some of the 4,000 supporters who turned out in Rome yesterday to call for asylum for the rebel Kurdish leader, Abdullah Ocalan. PHOTOGRAPH: FLUJO LEPI



Adolf Eichmann on trial in Jerusalem after being kidnapped by Israeli commandos in 1960

Argentina confronts former role as safe place for Nazis

Uri Goni in Buenos Aires

ARGENTINA is slowly drawing aside the veil on the role granted by its late president, Juan Perón, and his wife Evita to fugitives of Hitler's Third Reich during the late 1940s and early 1950s, when the country became a haven for Nazi Germany's war criminals.

Historians from all over the world who make up the government's Commission for the Clarification of Nazi Activities in Argentina (Cena) are conferring in Buenos Aires and will make public their first report on their investigations today. At issue is Argentina's "neutrality" during the second world war and the possible complicity between Argentina, the Vatican and the Allies to hide a reserve of anti-communist Nazis in Latin America in case they were needed during the cold war with the Soviet Union.

"This is a painful process for us," the Peronist foreign minister, Guido Di Tella, said

at the first plenary session. But splits are already opening up within the commission.

"If this is going to be the official version then it's unacceptable," said Shimon Samuels, vice-president of the Nazi-hunting organisation, the Simon Wiesenthal Centre.

Critics are disappointed by the figure the commission puts on Nazi war criminals in Argentina. The commission says that only 150 war criminals entered Argentina, not "thousands" as some have estimated.

"For decades Argentina has been accused of harbouring thousands of Nazi war criminals, now we know that the real number was much lower," said Cena's co-ordinator, Ignacio Kilch.

Mr Samuels disagreed. "There's something wrong with the Cena's quantification, it is unrealistic, there's no way that you can only have 150 war criminals in Argentina," he insisted. Among those who arrived was SS officer Adolf Eichmann, one of the architects of the Holocaust, who was kidnapped by an Israeli

commando in 1960, spirited out of Argentina to stand trial in Jerusalem and executed in 1962. Argentina protested at the invasion of its sovereignty, and demanded his return. Israel ignored the request.

Others who were never extradited included the Auschwitz doctor, Josef Mengele, who lived for decades in Argentina before dying in Brazil in 1979, and the "Butcher of Riga", Eduard Roschmann, blamed for the death of some 40,000 Jews in the ghetto of Riga in Latvia, who died in Paraguay in 1977.

In recent years Argentina has reversed its practice of ignoring extradition requests. In 1984, it extradited Erich Priebke, who participated in the shooting of 335 Italians in the Ardeatine Caves massacre in 1944. This week Priebke was condemned to life imprisonment by a court in Rome for his role in that massacre.

The Wiesenthal Centre also expressed surprise at the little progress made in the investigation into the alleged arrival of looted Nazi assets in Argentina.

Ban on Le Pen opens contest inside Front

Paul Webster in Paris

THE battle for control of the racist National Front was thrown wide open yesterday when an appeal court in Versailles confirmed Jean-Marie Le Pen's disqualification from holding public office because of violence during last year's general election campaign.

Although the court reduced his ineligibility from two years to one, the ban will force Mr Le Pen to abandon his European Parliament seat and outlaw him from leading his party's campaign in the June European elections. His deputy, Bruno Mégret, who wants Mr Le Pen to quit, has said he will defy plans to nominate the leader's wife, Jany Le Pen, to head a list of candidates including Charles de Gaulle, grandson of the former French president.

Mr Le Pen, aged 70, called a crisis meeting of party executives at his home in the Paris suburbs last night, and launched a campaign to protest against the sentence. Thousands of posters will be put up to try to stir up public support for planned street demonstrations.

"This is a scandalous decision wrapped in hypocrisy," Mr Le Pen said. "I was not the aggressor—I was attacked."

But his outcry against what he claimed was a miscarriage of justice and accusations of a politically rigged trial were interpreted as an attempt to stave off rebellion in a movement he has led for 25 years.

The National Front leader, who has been convicted of racial abuse and pro-Nazi sentiments in the past, had appealed against a sentence which included three months' suspended imprisonment and a 25,000 fine for attacking a Socialist candidate in the 1987 election, Annette Bergsøe. She was beaten up while opposing one of his daughters in a constituency west of Paris.

The court was shown television film and photographs of Mr Le Pen, a former paratrooper, harassing Ms Bergsøe and shouting insults which were cited in support of a second charge of verbal assault. He refused to attend the

court despite his contention that he had been drawn into an ambush by Socialist officials and that pictures had been edited to show him in the worst light. However, the appeal court was more lenient than the judges in April and reduced the fine to about \$500 while maintaining the suspended sentence.

Even though the period of ineligibility was cut, the National Front leader will lose his seats in the Marseille regional assembly and the European Parliament. Unless he appeals, he will be unable to contest any important election until the presidential and parliamentary polls in 2002.

Mr Le Pen accused the government of trying to kill him off politically, but insisted that he would stay head of the party. It now has an average of about 15 percent of the national vote. It also shares regional and local government with the orthodox right in some areas.

"Mad dreams that I will disappear because of a court decision will not be realised"

In a message aimed at Mr Mégret, who believes he can turn the party into France's biggest conservative movement by an alliance with Gaullists and centrists, he said: "The mad dreams of some people that I will disappear because of a court decision will not be realised."

Mr Le Pen said the court ruling would lead to an outburst of national affection which would profit his wife in the 1999 European vote.

"There is a couple culture in France which ensures that a wife becomes her husband's stand-in if circumstances demand," he said. "It is out of the question that the name of Le Pen will be arbitrarily excluded from the debate. Because of 25 years of publicity and commitment, it represents capital for the National Front."

Halve our nuclear arsenal, senator urges Clinton

Martin Kettle in Washington

PRESIDENT Bill Clinton should order immediate unilateral reductions in United States nuclear weapons and should aim to take its nuclear missile arsenal off instant alert by removing their warheads, a senior member of his party urged yesterday.

Senator Bob Kerrey of Nebraska, a possible Democratic presidential contender in 2000, said the US should make an instant cut of more than half of its nuclear forces, reducing its warheads from around 6,000 to 2,000-2,500.

The president should also stand down all US nuclear weapons surplus to internationally agreed treaty levels, reducing its current "hair-trigger alert" status, and physically separate nuclear warheads from their missile delivery systems, Mr Kerrey said. The US should negotiate with Russia to stand down all nuclear warheads.

"Our national security will not be endangered by leaders having two days, rather than two minutes, to make life-and-death decisions about nuclear war," Mr Kerrey told the Council for Foreign Relations in New York.

Mr Kerrey's speech is politically significant in several ways. The Nebraska senator has hinted that he may run for the Democratic nomination in 2000, and told an interviewer this week that he will make a decision before the year's end.

However the Clinton administration has also been quietly sounding out opinion in both political parties in over recent months about proposals for nuclear weapons reduction and the deactiva-

tion of warheads, which would have implications for international nuclear commitments, including Britain's.

The administration and the Republican-controlled Congress have been deadlocked on the issue of over weapons issues for more than a year. However, the administration has been sounding out both parties about proposals for weapons reduction. Mr Clinton is expected to address the issue during his annual State of the Union address to Congress next January, and Mr Kerrey's speech was seen by some observers yesterday as a kite-flying exercise for an administration initiative on nuclear weapons after months of deadlock with Congress.

"This is a perfect time to start raising these issues to see how they might play if the president endorses them," Dan Plesch, of the British American Security Information Centre in Washington, said yesterday.

Mr Kerrey said that maintenance of high levels of nuclear missile deployment merely forced Russia to maintain an equally high and worse-controlled arsenal of its own. The \$25 billion spent annually by the US on its nuclear arsenal is "diverting resources from real and imminent threats to fight an old one," Mr Kerrey said.

He said unilateral action would also help curb the global tendency which had helped make nuclear arms the "Rohr" wristwatch of international relations: a costly purchase whose real purpose is not the service it provides, but the prestige it provides.

The measures were needed in order to reduce the real threat from proliferation.

Soap bubbles of a forlorn lover

Julian Borger in Washington

YOU'VE seen her walk, you've seen her smile, you've seen her bring a presidency to the brink. Now hear Monica talk. And talk and talk and talk...

The endless soap opera which swallowed US politics whole 11 months ago was finally enlivened with a soundtrack yesterday and its moody, love-lorn, silent star gained a breathy, girlish voice as tapes of her secretly recorded conversations were broadcast to a weary nation.

And once she started, she was unstoppable: 22 hours of meandering telephone dialogues with the now infamous Linda Tripp, her former friend, who coaxed, watched television, and apparently ate delicious quantities of food while Monica whined, giggled, sobbed and declared her love for the Big Creep, aka President Bill Clinton.

According to the polls, nearly three-quarters of the American people did not want to hear a word of it. It was almost as if they had gone down on their knees to the pollsters and begged to be spared. But their pleas fell on deaf ears.

In an audio reprise of September's launch of the Starr Report, the boxes of tapes were ceremoniously opened and handed out to impatient

network producers. Within seconds the voice was heard coast-to-coast, and the surviving aficionados of the Lewinsky affair could compare reality with the soundtracks their imaginations had added to the thousands of pages of transcript.

In reality, the heroine sounded even younger than her 22 years at the time of the recordings, as she blurted out her love — "I know this is stupid, but Linda I don't know why I have these feelings for him. Maybe I'm crazy. And the first time I ever looked into his eyes close-up and was with him alone, I saw somebody totally different than I had expected

to see. And that's the person I fell in love with."

Even when she drafts a letter to the president to demand a \$90,000 (\$256,000) job at the United Nations — "I would like to be living in New York and gainfully employed by the United Nations," she says December 1, whatever date you come up with — she sounds more like a spoiled child demanding a treat than the "little Marilyn Monroe vixen" that Ms Tripp describes.

Ms Tripp herself has a voice like an electric saw as she cuts straight to the chase. She huskily encourages Monica to seal her semen-stained blue dress in a ziplock bag and hand it like an "antique".

And all this time, hour after

hour, the television in Ms Tripp's house drones away. Monica opens her heart to an aural backdrop of munching and sports commentary.

When Ms Lewinsky asks about the background voices, Ms Tripp assures her: "Yeah, it's the TV. It's always the TV. This TV's always on." And when Monica thinks she hears clicks on the line — presumably the sound of her friend pressing the record button — Ms Tripp tells her: "It's just the sound of her fiddling with her gear."

"Oh," the ever-credulous Monica says. Ms Tripp is currently arguing in a Maryland court that she did not know taping private conversations was illegal in her home state.

It was these tapes which first alerted the independent counsel Kenneth Starr to the Monica scandal. It was almost impossible to imagine the bespectacled inquisitor listening with mounting excitement as he realised his four-year pursuit of the president might not be in vain.

The transcripts have been poured over by the lawyers for the past two months, so the tapes themselves are unlikely to have little legal weight. But voice analysts were already gathering in television studios yesterday to weigh up each inflection, stutter and sigh, searching for echoes of the two women's souls.

Hyde to call surprise witness

ON THE eve of Kenneth Starr's appearance as the sole witness against Mr Clinton in the impeachment inquiry into the president, the judiciary committee chairman, Henry Hyde, pressed his Republican majority to call new witnesses including a former Democratic party fundraiser, John Huang, *writes Martin Kettle in Washington*.

Mr Huang has been co-operating with Mr Starr's Whitewater investigation, which produced a 15-count indictment against Mr Clinton's Arkansas lawyer friend Webster Hubbell last week. But he has had no role in the Lewinsky investigation which had formed the only basis for the president's impeachment.

The broadening of the inquiry was reinforced yesterday when Mr Starr sent the committee new documents about Mr Hubbell. Mr Starr may be planning to verbally accuse against Mr Clinton on Tuesday he would demand that Baghdad hand over two documents, one dealing with chemical

door headquarters. A reluctant spokeswoman said they would be starting up their computers, checking their communications equipment and waiting for their orders.

The chief inspector, Richard Butler, testing the promises made by Iraq at the weekend, said on Tuesday he would demand that Baghdad hand over two documents, one dealing with chemical

weapons used in the 1980s Iran-Iraq war and the other with biological weapons.

"In those documents, we should be able to get a truthful knowledge of what kind of chemical weapons they had and the same for the biological area, and we need them now," he said.

"We've waited too long. Our purpose is not to sort of screw Iraq to the wall. It is to get this job done."

UN weapon hunters slip quietly back into Iraq

Maggie O'Kane in Baghdad

TWO white estate cars pulled into the United Nations compound in Baghdad yesterday.

Each carried four men wearing baseball caps and dark glasses — the advance team of 90 UN weapons inspectors back to renew their hunt for Saddam Hussein's hidden weaponry.

The Iraqi capital seemed as oblivious to the return of the inspectors as it was to the horror of an imminent attack by the world's most powerful air force.

For the inspectors' return was low-key. None of the usual rifle gestures to the press, just a procession of casually dressed people in baseball caps and dark glasses making their way up the stairs to their sealed-off third-

floor headquarters. A reluctant spokeswoman said they would be starting up their computers, checking their communications equipment and waiting for their orders.

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In his own words

JEAN-MAURIE Le Pen has made low-level insults his stock in trade and has been convicted three times of inciting racial hatred or denying the Holocaust. Among his most provocative statements made between 1983 and 1988 were:

• "It is artificial to bring [football] players from abroad and label them the French team. Most... cannot sing the Marseillaise," — a remark made two years before France won the 1998 World Cup.

• "François Léotard [a conservative party leader critical of the National Front's Vichy links] is a mentally sick psychotic who has to open tombs to satisfy his political hatred."

• "We knew there were Alpine cretins and now we know there are Pyrenean cretins." — a reference to a former health minister and mayor of Lourdes, Philippe Douste-Blazy, who refused an alliance.

• "Toulon [controlled by

extremists] can do without the gargling of a singer whose comments are no more than the yapping of puppy dog" — a reference to Patrick Bruel, a Jewish singer who refused to perform in the Mediterranean port.

• "France's decline can be resumed by the formula: Political Side [Aids], whose initials signify socialism, immigration, drugs and affairs."

• "International Jewry has played a significant role in the development of an anti-national spirit [in France]."

• "I don't say that the gas chambers never existed because I wasn't able to see them. But I believe they are a detail in the history of the second world war" — a comment made in 1988 which led to prosecution in France. After he repeated the affirmation in Germany this year, his immunity from prosecution as Member of the European Parliament was lifted in a vote.

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GENETIC LEAK

Botched accounting costs billions

£600m for post-Soviet nuclear safety 'lost'

Martin Walker
in Strasbourg

A SHAMING series of accounting disasters and bungles has afflicted every aspect of the European Union's finances, according to the annual report by the Court of Auditors.

In the most chilling scandal, \$600 million allotted to repairing and making safe the nuclear power plants of the old Soviet bloc has been either wasted, lost, embezzled or unspent.

It is particularly worrying that at the end of 1997 it was not possible to judge whether there had been any actual progress in terms of nuclear safety, the president of the court, Bernhard Friedmann, told MEPs yesterday.

It is especially embarrassing because the EU sought and won from the G7 group of major industrial states responsibility for managing the international effort to secure the 65 dangerous nuclear power plants in the old Eastern bloc. It seems to have bungled the job.

The court's report is an annual ritual, but this year's was a bombshell, because it did not list the usual dire straits often amounting to a few million pounds each. Rather, it focused on mismanagement and botched accounting that amounted to more than £10 billion.

The catalogue began with the EU's 15 member states, whose own tax systems failed to collect \$50 billion in VAT, almost enough to finance the entire EU budget.

It continued with a list of administrative and accounting bungles by the Brussels Commission itself, starting with "an understatement of the commitments of the year (1997) by almost 800 million ecu and the understatement of off-balance sheet commitments by about 4,000 million ecu".

One ecu is worth 70p: 4 billion ecu equals £2.8 billion.

The Commission was told

that it had been unable to keep track of its funds. "The total value of advances or payments on account registered during the year as budgetary payments is understated by at least 4,126 million ecu."

Then it was told that it could not keep reliable books. The total amount of debtors representing amounts owed by the member states to the community institutions and disclosed in the consolidated balance sheet as 1,756.6 million ecu is not accurately reflected in the accounts.

Moreover, the Commission often did not know what it had spent. "Bank account balances of the community are not accurately reflected in the balance sheet because amounts held in certain third countries to a value of several hundred million ecu have been recorded as budget payments instead of assets. For the Phare programme (in eastern Europe) the amount was at least 370 million ecu."

MEPs listened against the full scale of the mess was laid before them. The auditors said: "The incidence of errors affecting the transactions underlying the Commission's payments is so high that the court has had to give an ad-

verse opinion on legality and regularity." This was a polite accountant's way of saying that if the EU were a company its directors would be bankrupt or in jail.

"Many of the errors found in the payments produce direct evidence of system's weaknesses. Some of them arise from systematic failures to apply requisite checks before payments are made," the report says.

"Failures to maintain appropriate accounting and other records, or to keep required registers of land or animals, or to apply proper arrangements for competitive tendering, or to carry out the required checks in a proper manner, all demonstrate that appropriate control systems have not been implemented."

About \$3 billion had been misspent, the court concluded: 5 per cent of the entire budget.

"It is disgraceful. The commission is an incompetent organisation," said a German MEP, Edith Müller, whose party has warned for years of the nuclear safety scandal brewing in Russia.

"If this goes on, there is no point even discussing who pays what in budget payments for the future, if the Commission cannot collect what it is owed and keep a proper account of the money it has," said Rosemarie Wemheuer, a German Social Democrat MEP from the budget committee.

The only kind words for the Commission came from a British Labour MEP, Terry Wynn, from Merseyside, who said that at least the budget commissioner, Erkki Liikanen, "is genuinely trying to clean all this up, and reforms he has set in motion should improve matters".

British Conservative MEPs least on the evidence that Europe's bureaucrats could not even run an efficient bureaucracy. Their leader, Edward McMillan-Scott, said: "This is a lamentable record, which confirms all our suspicions about lack of public accountability, and mismanagement."

Alongside the genuine vic-

times of the nuclear reactor explosion in 1986 and its aftermath, and the aid organisations set up to help them, arose a phantom army of opportunists and fakers.

There were *tsheikvidatori*, the "false liquidators" who claimed state welfare payments by pretending to have taken part in the clean-up after the disaster. There were the healthy children of well-off Ukrainians who took up places on trips abroad organised to help the "children of Chernobyl".

There were the scores of bogus Ukrainian aid organisations who used the Chernobyl name to gain duty-free status for their commercial imports of booze and cigarettes.

It was into this maelstrom of genuine suffering and fraudulence that the European Union launched part of its Tacis programme. Technical Assistance to the Commonwealth of Independent States, in 1992.

Vladimir Kolesnikov, head of the international relations department of the Ukrainian nuclear agency, said yesterday that Tacis had put roughly 17 million euros (£12 million) a year into the country's nuclear power programme since.

"Every ruble has been accounted for," he said, adding that the EU auditors' report alleging misuse of funds set aside for east European nu-

clear safety was the first he had heard of Tacis money going astray.

Despite the Chernobyl disaster, Ukraine maintains one of the largest nuclear power programmes in Europe, with five functioning atomic stations, including the continent's biggest, in Zaporozhye, and Chernobyl itself.

The only problem Mr Kolesnikov could remember was with a consignment of French paint delivered to the nuclear power station at Rivne, in western Ukraine, which had not been approved by Ukrainian regulators.

"There were some misunderstandings at the beginning, but here in Ukraine we work soul to soul. We don't have any complaints," he said.

Western aid to Ukraine's nuclear industry, including Tacis money and sums to be lent by the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, is as ambiguous as the Ukrainians' attitude towards their atomic power stations. If one

having under cultivation. Investigators in Britain, advised by the National Audit Office, are using satellite technology to spy on farms to make sure they are not fiddling claims under the "set-aside" rules. The satellites can check each field to see if a crop is secretly being grown on it, breaking the rules for claiming "set-aside" cash.

The report shows that one of the biggest British fiddlers originated in New Zealand. Special concessions allowing the importation of low-fat New Zealand butter and cheese to encourage healthy eating were exploited by exporters of high-fat products to avoid paying EU levies.

The report estimates that the EU lost 400 million ecu and will never recover the full amount because the fraud has been going for years.

David Davis, Conservative chairman of the Commons Public Accounts Committee, led calls for a new fraud team to be set up.

"The present team is half staffed by part-timers, works without proper knowledge of individual country's legal system, takes years to complete examinations and rarely takes any disciplinary action even when it discovers fraud," he said.



Many Ukrainians pretended to have taken part in the Chernobyl clean-up operation to obtain aid for their 'suffering'

Chernobyl spells fraud

James Meek in Moscow

FOR Europeans, the name Chernobyl is synonymous with disaster and tragedy — the site of the world's worst civilian nuclear accident. For many Ukrainians, it is synonymous with fraud.

Alongside the genuine vic-

times of the nuclear reactor explosion in 1986 and its aftermath, and the aid organisations set up to help them, arose a phantom army of opportunists and fakers.

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Every euro must add up

Comment

Alex Brummer

THE disclosure by the European Union's financial watchdog, the Court of Auditors, that \$3 billion — or 5 per cent of the EU's budget — has gone walkabout is no less serious for being an annual occurrence.

That such a large sum can be unaccounted for is astonishing.

As worrying is the complacency of the European Commission, which sought to explain away the missing cash yesterday as "irregularities".

When, a few years ago, an internationally approved audit of the World Bank found that an unacceptably high proportion of its loans to poor countries were "non-performing", the finding resulted in top-to-bottom reforms. The conditions under which funds were disbursed, who was responsible for them and how they were spent, was made available for all to see.

It is ironic that one of the main critics of the way in which multilateral lenders like the World Bank and IMF operate is Germany, which also happens to be one of the main contributors to the EU budget.

The German authorities who insisted that strict budgetary criteria must be adhered to as a condition of entering European Monetary Union appear willing to sit on the sidelines while the EU allows money to flow out of its coffers into foreign budgets, without proper accounting conventions.

Maastricht insists that no national budget should be more than 3 per cent in deficit. Yet the European Commission is operating at a level where 5 per cent lost in irregularities is all but dismissed.

The president of the court, Bernhard Friedmann, is correct in his view that the \$3 billion of unaccounted funds — whether they are the result of bureaucratic inefficiencies or fraud — threatens the whole of the European Union. The credibility and the durability of the euro currency area, which comes into being on January 1, is partly dependent on the integrity of the commission's budgeting process. If cash is to flow from the richer areas of the community to the poorer regions — to assist in preventing the economic disruption caused by having a fixed currency system and a single interest rate — then every euro will have to count.

No doubt the missing funds will be seized upon by Eurosceptics as another reason why Britain should be an "out" country. The reality for Euro-enthusiasts is that the EU budget must be made to work more honestly, if the euro area is to have a chance of surviving.

A phantom army of opportunists and fakers arose in the aftermath of the nuclear explosion

western Ukraine, which had not been approved by Ukrainian regulators.

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GENETIC LEAK

"The context for our work, which is no doubt feeding back to all those involved in this issue, is a collapse of public support in Britain that has worsened over the summer"

Sir Charles Munn, Munn

Monsanto's expensive campaign to get you to swallow genetically engineered food has failed. The quote above from their own research shows the public's overwhelming rejection of being guinea pigs in Monsanto's experiments. Little wonder that food retailers are on a knife edge, seeing only a 50/50 chance of a future for genetically engineered food.

You can help tip the balance. If you are concerned, please let us know.

Visit our website at www.greenpeace.org.uk/monsanto

or call Greenpeace Freephone 0800 269 065

or return the coupon below to Genetic Leak, Greenpeace, FREEPOST ND944, Northampton NN3 6BR. We will send you a free copy of Monsanto's damning research and an update on our campaign for real food.

Any donations are also most welcome. Thank you.

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GREENPEACE

LB002

British farmers push boundaries to collect new hand-outs

David Hencke
Westminster Correspondent

SPAGHETTI farming is the latest British wheeze to make millions of pounds out of new European Union agriculture subsidies, the Court of Auditors revealed in its report published yesterday.

The declaration that East Anglia is a "non-traditional" area for growing durum wheat — the basic ingredient of Italian pasta — has let farmers make a fortune from new subsidies.

They are sharing in an explosion of EU aid for durum wheat which allows growers to receive a higher income from subsidies than they can get from selling their crops.

The court estimates that taxpayers could save 750 million ecu (£500 million) a year by cutting the aid for durum wheat to the level British farmers get for growing maize and rape in adjacent fields.

The extra subsidies are increased by farmers' claims which exaggerate by about 20 per cent the amount of land used for growing durum wheat.

Most of these areas are outside Britain. But British farmers have been including woods and buildings in the land they report

having under cultivation. Investigators in Britain, advised by the National Audit Office, are using satellite technology to spy on farms to make sure they are not fiddling claims under the "set-aside" rules. The satellites can check each field to see if a crop is secretly being grown on it, breaking the rules for claiming "set-aside" cash.

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15 September 1998 - 4 January 1999

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The Guardian

Comment

Diary

Simon Bowers

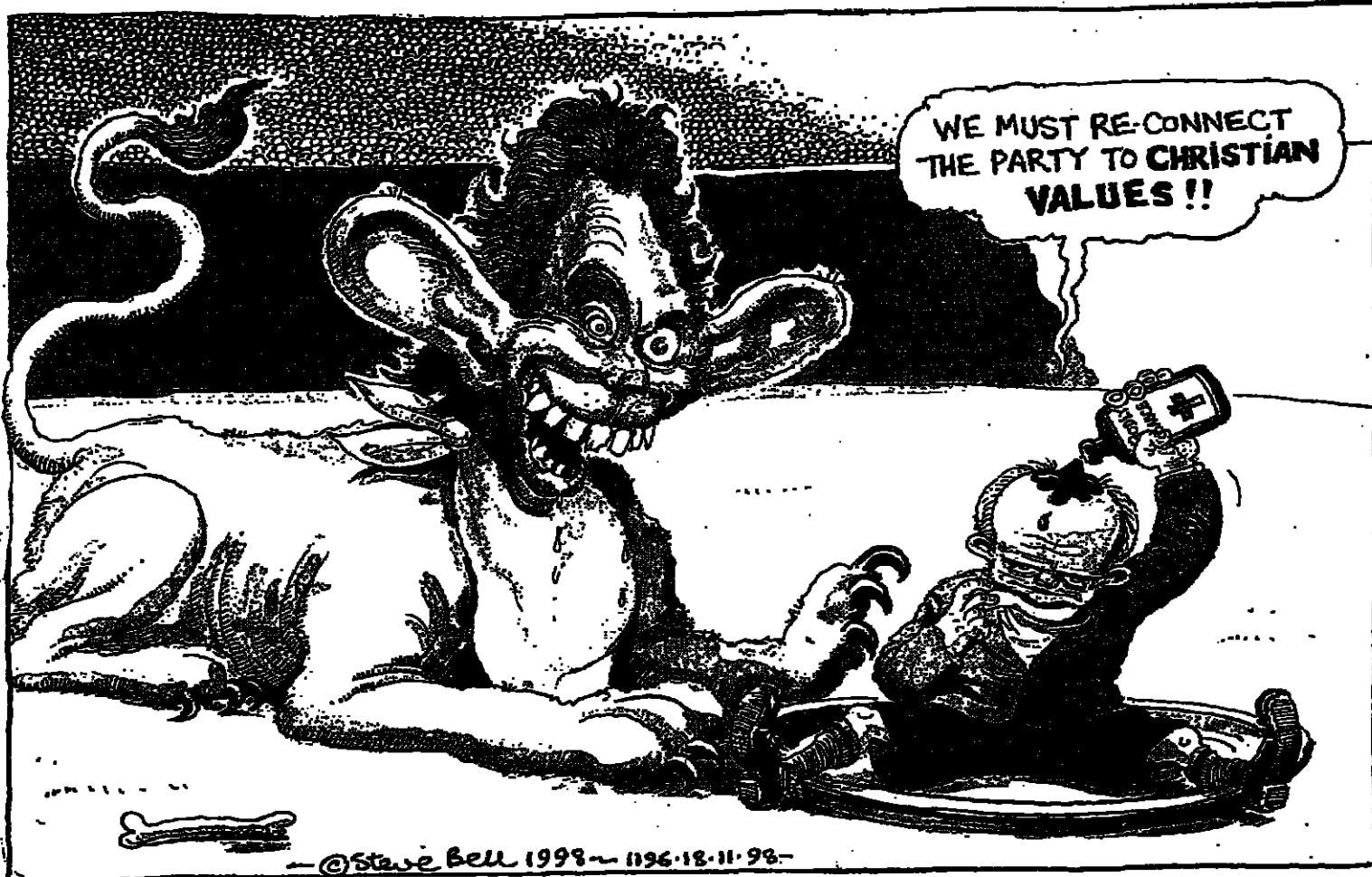
A WARM Diary welcome to Alfonso Dhlakama, President of the Renamo party in Mozambique, who will be speaking to the Royal African Society in London next Monday. You may remember Dhlakama as the Commander in Chief of Renamo in its former incarnation as a terrorist army, trained and led by the South African military, specialising in slicing off noses and routinely forcing children to participate in the mutilation and murder of their parents before press-gang them into its ranks. However since 1993 Mr Dhlakama has enjoyed an extensive rehabilitation at home, not unlike that of our current Chilean guest, so who are we to pass judgement on past indiscretions? For those interested, the talk kicks off at 6pm sharp at The Royal Commonwealth Society, 18 Northumberland Avenue, WC2. Should be a lively event.

A ABOUT pollster Philip Gould's recent book, *The Unfinished Revolution* (Focus & Focus £3.99), has helped us resolve many of the confusions surrounding New Labour and its path to power. Contrary to press hype, for example, Philip tells us that Gordon Brown and Mr Mandelson never fell out over the former's leadership prospects. Perhaps one of the most intriguing revelations, however, concerns how perilously close this paper came to topping the New Labour project. Philip remembers he first suspected something was wrong when he got a "Call Alastair Urgently," pager message. "Thinking he meant trouble. When I phoned him, he said, 'It's a bugger, this.' My heart sank. 'They have got one of your memos.' (That's Phil's memo, leaked to the Guardian, in which he described New Labour as "unfit to govern"). 'I just said: 'Oh, my God.' ... For a moment," Philip confesses, "it did look as though the New Labour project might be falling apart." How close, it seems, we came... but alas no cigar.

S ORRY to see Richard Branson's letter on the page opposite yesterday in which he berated this paper for "relentlessly attacking" his Virgin trains. "They're not helped by the Guardian's demonising and unfair attacks on them, which have no objective balance," wrote Mr B. "Perhaps in future you could consider giving them some encouragement to balance the negatives." Meanwhile morale on the Diary is high following the surprise delivery of a crate of Virgin Flyers — a blend of vodka and a hi-energy caffeine drink — from Mr Branson's beverages department. While the alcopop may not suit every taste, we followed instructions on the yellow and green bottles. Do not mix with other stimulants and enjoyed a few bottles immensely. In an effort to restore Virgin morale, however, we have forwarded the remaining drinks to their Birmingham HQ. Pecker up now, Richard!

T HANKS to Mary and Grenville Young of Bath who write to inform us of a concert sign in St Nicholas's Church, Fenway. "These premises," it reads, "are fitted with a Milbank Induction Loop." Our curiosity aroused we call Milbank Electronics in East Sussex who are happy to furnish us with an explanation. The MIL, it turns out, is a device for the hard of hearing which transmits a controlled range of frequencies, you will be intrigued to learn, at increased volume directly to recipients wearing hearing aids. Add-ons to the product include a "secret paging" service and something called "an input slave version". Aha, so that's how it's done, Mr Tony.

A MEMBER of the Saturday matinee audience at Ugly Rumours, the Tariq Ali and Howard Brenton anti-Blair satire playing at Kilburn's Tricycle Theatre, has accidentally dropped a document stamped "secret," listing several names and private numbers in the Cheltenham area — home of GCHQ. If you have lost such an item please call the Diary.



Let's hear it for the Big Picture — film that makes us think as well as feel

Jonathan Freedland



O SCAR night may be months away, but I've already assembled my shortlist. Besides Saving Private Ryan and Elizabeth, I'll be rooting for three big movies in the Best Picture category and not just because they're fun to watch. Antz, currently number one at the UK box office, Pleasantville, coming soon, and the mega-hit Truman Show should be celebrated for extending a welcome trend: the brainy-up of our popular culture.

Fusty elitists may still deploy that dread phrase, "dumbing down," but the rest of us can draw comfort from a current cinema which boasts not just splashy technicolour but grey matter, too. Private Ryan has been lauded for its piercing evocation of war, Elizabeth for its sweep and spectacle, but the other three add something else: they are all movies of ideas.

Antz, an animated feature about cut-out-looking insects, is perhaps the biggest surprise. Deploying the same computer-generated whizz-bangery that made Toy Story such a smash, it should be standard Disney fare. Instead it is the closest Hollywood has come to Animal Farm.

It follows Z, a neurotic worker ant — voiced by Woody Allen — who feels out of place among the mass of insects that surrounds him: in the opening scene he confides to his shrink that "Life's not easy when you're the middle child of five million." Z falls in love, breaks from the pack and pursues his own destiny — eventually leading to an ant colony millions in rebellion against Mandible, the evil dictator who rules over them (his voice on loan

from Gene Hackman). It's a short, polished film with a starry cast and a witty script. All of which could have obscured Antz's real strength, as a modern parable touching on timeless, universal themes. There are the now-familiar nods toward feminism (like Pocahontas, Aladdin's Jasmine and Titanic's Kate Winslet before her, Antz's heroine, played by Sharon Stone, refuses an arranged marriage) and environmentalism (ant paradise, "Insectopia," is a rubbish tip). But the movie also breaks fresher ground: class struggle.

At one point, a pair of disgruntled ants mutter about Ryan's taking control of the means of production. The foreman is shown as a spineless (I lackey, while the masses are distracted from the futility of their work by cheap entertainment and drink. This is the kind of movie which, 40-odd years ago, would have got its writers blacklisted.

And Antz does not just play with socialist imagery. It offers an ideal peculiar to the American left: old, in which individual fulfilment and collective solidarity are not at odds, but mutually dependent. In true American style, Z has to break free and think for himself — but only so that he can lead his entire class in the construction of a new society. When he and his fellow ants form a vast column, a living ladder, to escape from disaster, the result ranks alongside the barn-building scene in Witness as a perfect Hollywood evocation of the beauty of collective action.

Similar territory is explored in Pleasantville, a sat-

ire of 1950s smalltown America yet to reach here. The location is an idealised, picket-fence community where Dad works, Mom bakes cookies, the sky is always blue and the high-school team always wins. This is the land of Father Knows Best, permanently rendered in black and white — until two teenagers from the 1990s arrive. In a neat device, the kids' presence begins to spread colour across Pleasantville, from a bluish to Mom's cheek to a monochrome tree suddenly exploding into orange flames. As the town shakes off repression and conformity, embracing individualism and freedom, so grey becomes colour.

T HE film has provoked a wide, engaged debate in the United States with conservatives condemning it as an attack on the values of 1950s, white-bread America — rather than to revive. To liberals, Pleasantville is a much-needed counterstrike by the counterculture, a reminder of the closed era the 1990s rightly brought to an end. It's also a timely warning that the much-vaunted ideal of "community" is not all sunny. Pleasantville cuts through the current communitarian blather, pointing out that the close-knit society can be suffocating — and lethal for those shut out of it.

So Pleasantville is an intensely political film, a satirical allegory for our times. Small wonder that the director, Gary Ross, got the idea four years ago, "the day after Newt Gingrich was swept into power". Less partisan, but no

less significant, is the landmark film of 1996, the Truman Show. Its account of a man born and raised, unwittingly, on 24-hour television has the quality of parable — right down to the Everyman name of the title character. It's a satire of our TV-driven culture, but it raises more enduring questions, too. Truman lives in a flawless, sheltered community (Pleasantville on a studio lot), but longs to break free.

His final confrontation with the show's producer, the Biblically-named Christof, is reminiscent of Jonah's battle with a raging God, or of Adam's expulsion from Eden. His creator punishes him, then wants to save him. But the true man has to break free.

These are big themes, handled adroitly. On the eve of the 21st century, Hollywood seems to be taking its power and responsibility seriously, daring to address the largest of questions. Between them this trio of movies serve as latter-day fables, taking on a task previously left to myth or scripture: opening up the most enduring human dilemma in a form accessible to everyone.

Unfortunately our own film-makers cannot say the same. The likes of Lock, Stock and Two Smoking Barrels or Divorcing Jack may be skillfully-made, but their focus is narrow. They are addressing only to tell small stories well. Much of our contemporary fiction is in the same vein, zeroing in on the minutiae, the detail of human relationships, the good liberal's blood boils in the presence of the old enemy. Labour ministers and MPs sometimes looked as if they were sucking lemons, instinctively queasy at mingling among deceptively urbane politicians and the more wild-eyed denizens of the right. This is the true liberal divide. Conservatives are aliens on the other side of a cultural and moral chasm, beside which Labour and Lib Dems are blood brothers, almost identical twins. Not to recognise their common genes is an unaffordable sideshow in the ongoing Great War.

O N THIS page on Monday, Peter Preston pronounced obsequies for the Woolly Liberal. But woolly was only a term of abuse used by socialists against their estranged brethren. Who wouldn't become a bit woolly after so long in the wilderness? Liberalism is alive and rampant: it is New Labour. If some Lib Dems don't recognise it when they see it, that's only because for nearly a century, to be a liberal has been to be a loser. But liberalism is the master now, though power gives it a new complexion.

No, no, they cry, Blair and Straw are authoritarians, control freaks, homogenisers. We Lib Dems stand for diversity, freedom and a thousand flowers blooming. But their blooming flowers are only the fruits of political failure, random blooms snatched from any old bush in the desert. Now a

Liberalism is alive and rampant and in power: it is New Labour

Death to the tribal war

Polly Toynbee



D EATH to "destructive tribalism". Blair and Ashdown declare in their new marriage of true minds. But impediments with bones through their noses glare across the palisades at each other with mutual detestation — Prescott and Straw leading one side, Simon Hughes leading the other. Over the century that has divided them, too much blood has flowed, too many small murders are still unavenged in little local wars: Labour seethes over Lib Dem dirty leaflet campaigns, their mavericks, their flexible values depending on where they fight. Lib Dems fume over Labour rotten boroughs still festering and unreformed, affronted by Labour's imperious electoral triumphalism. Good haters, all.

Everywhere tribalism fuels politics. Them and Us. There is only one genuine great divide — between liberals and conservatives, left and right. The rest is trivial: misleading labels separate those who call themselves liberals, social democrats or New Labour.

Only the brief interruption of socialism split British liberalism apart. It left the Liberal Party stranded on an electoral desert island, where surviving as they could on scraps and berries, this long-lost branch of the family developed a language and some strange habits of its own. Just as Israel welcomed home the black Falashas of Ethiopia as their lost tribe, so it's time for Labour and Lib Dems to recognise their true kinship. Socialism is dead, long live liberalism. There is not a thin policy paper between them: they are all liberals now.

At an Anglo-Spanish conference last weekend, I observed that universal chaos that divides the right from the left wherever they meet. This was aided by the presence of those such as Telegraph editor Charles Moore from the far outposts of British high conservatism, and by sitting next to a Spanish culture minister who spent the evening extolling Hayekian economics, the privatisation of everything and the total abolition of taxation. By the pricking of the thumbs, by the twitching of every political fibre, an urge to reach for a clove of garlic and a stake, the good liberal's blood boils in the presence of the old enemy. Labour ministers and MPs sometimes looked as if they were sucking lemons, instinctively queasy at mingling among deceptively urbane politicians and the more wild-eyed denizens of the right. This is the true liberal divide. Conservatives are aliens on the other side of a cultural and moral chasm, beside which Labour and Lib Dems are blood brothers, almost identical twins. Not to recognise their common genes is an unaffordable sideshow in the ongoing Great War.

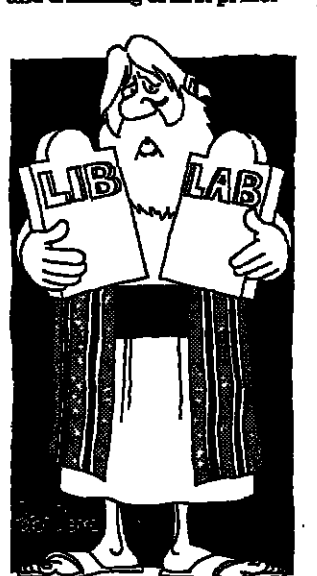
O N THIS page on Monday, Peter Preston pronounced obsequies for the Woolly Liberal. But woolly was only a term of abuse used by socialists against their estranged brethren. Who wouldn't become a bit woolly after so long in the wilderness? Liberalism is alive and rampant: it is New Labour. If some Lib Dems don't recognise it when they see it, that's only because for nearly a century, to be a liberal has been to be a loser. But liberalism is the master now, though power gives it a new complexion.

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share of power beckons they too are pruning their rampant suckers. Ashdown is no woollier than Blair these days. Here is the liberal creed both parties share and conservatives don't:

- A presumption in favour of the underdog;
- Belief in progress: things can always be made better;
- Belief that all humans are redeemable (in this world not the next);
- Belief that history always proves conservatives and reactionaries wrong. (But the left not always right.);
- Trust in reason over heritage, custom and superstition;
- Creating wealth and using it creatively;
- Tax as much as you dare;
- Remember history will judge most wars unnecessary;
- Tolerate almost everything but intolerance;
- Strive for equality of opportunity;
- Strive for level playing fields between men and women, workers and managers, old and young;
- Side with the consumer, not the owner or the producer;
- Celebrate cultural, social and racial diversity;
- Enjoy, don't fear the shock of the new in culture and art;
- Regard sex and family life as no business of the state;
- Protect children but don't use that duty as an excuse for over-protecting adults;
- Hat say some old Lib Dems and quite a few Labourites too, that hardly sounds like the Blairite agenda, does it? But it is, essentially. We live in an imperfect world where the needs of getting and keeping power, of governing with enough consent always requires ducking, weaving and trimming of first princ-

Here is the liberal creed both parties share and conservatives don't



Here is the liberal creed both parties share and conservatives don't

ples. Sometimes it means liberal lights get too well hidden under bushels of pragmatism. Yet those first principles remain and they're shared by most New Labour and Liberal Democrat supporters alike. Think how many fundamentals of Labour ideology were actually founded by Liberals: the welfare state, the Labour George and Beveridge and liberal economics by John Maynard Keynes.

The hows and the whens of this great project will be chewed over by the tribalists of both sides. The Blair/Ashdown communiqué talked of wider and deeper cooperation but went too far in appeasement with a promise to maintain "two sovereign independent parties". For the only thing that divides them is the need to fight each other in elections. They will fight one another next year in European and local elections, in Scottish and Welsh assemblies, drumming up artificial differences again and again. It will be for the psephologists to calculate whether eventually the forces of liberalism will best hold conservatism at bay by merger or by post-FK coalition. What matters now is recognising their common ideology — even if they continue to devise slightly different policies for arriving at the same goals. But as long as they keep their eye on the common tribal enemy, all will be well.

Mandelson's Dome will be a dead dog unless a miracle rescues the Jubilee line

Dogs don't talk

Clare Sambrook

A T London Bridge last week workers on the Jubilee Line Extension had a routine fire drill. Electricians underground couldn't hear the alarms so 200 men downed tools last Wednesday and haven't worked since. The contractors, Drake & Scull, told a union safety representative and 10 other grumblers to take themselves off to another site. On Monday all 450 electricians on the line stayed at home and yesterday they sat about in Portakabins on unofficial strike.

The Tube's in trouble. They're raising fares again soon. Last week much of the network stalled for want of a little insulating plate. They've spent a packet on Wehrmacht-style designer caps that staff refuse to wear.

Most ominously, the new Jubilee Line to the Greenwich Dome is running out of time. That's a problem

for the Government, especially Peter Mandelson. It is absolutely crucial to his Millennium Experience.

Dome people, paid to be optimistic, say: "The Experience will be easy to get to." It certainly won't be if the Jubilee Line isn't there. It is supposed to carry more than half the 12 million hoped-for visitors, yet it is still a troubled hard-hat site.

Construction was already one year late in starting when, in December 1993, London Transport's chairman, Sir Wilfred Newton, promised John Major the extension would be "on time and on budget". Sir Wilf's deadline passed eight months ago. The line devoured £1.8 billion budget and champs towards £3 billion. The very latest final deadline is autumn 1999.

"You'd have to look very hard to find a project that was finished on time and on budget," is London Transport's theme these days.

Sadly, their Fact Controllers can't supply copies of all their broken promises: the computer ate them. There have been unexpected problems outside their control, they say. Archaeological sites appeared from nowhere. A tunnel collapsed on an unrelated

It's been very quiet underground at night and the deadline looms

project using similar tunnelling techniques and work had to stop again.

There've been other problems too. Westinghouse promised a sippy new signalling system; it was considered vital to achieving the required 24 trains every hour. It didn't work, and now 17 trains an hour will do. London Transport told MPs last year contrac-

tors would pay penalties for delays. Now that topic is "confidential". London Transport, at the start, did not tell contractors to agree terms with the workers. Why bother? Labour was cheap. It isn't now: electricians pulled in between £50,000 and £70,000 a year until the European working hours directive came in five weeks ago. The men wanted something if they were to waive their rights to shorter hours. They didn't get it. It's been very quiet underground at night since then and the deadline looms ever nearer.

We know that London Underground are in trouble, because they've called in Riley P Bechtel and the Bechtel company of California to complete the project. If your nuclear power station explodes, Riley's your man; and he got Kuwait oil lines going after Saddam's 1990 invasion. Bechtel (who does not come cheap) has family millions

which helped put Nixon in the White House. Bechtel boys George Schulz and Casper Weinberger stood at Reagan's side. How much they will charge for trying to get us to Peter's party on time is a commercial secret.

Tony Blair said the Dome should put "no additional burden on the public purse". It would create "a huge halo effect for the UK economy", gushed Mandelson. Surely it's the other way around? We're paying for all those Jubilee Line extras.

The Government, the Dome people and London Transport too, are certain now, certainly, absolutely, definitely, that the trains will arrive on time. It's that pitiable certainty people have who think their pets can talk. They have to persuade potential sponsors to believe it too. But in the sponsorship trade the Dome is already what they call a dog. Take away the Jubilee Line and it's going to be a dead dog.

Guard

Europe's red hole

Letters to the Editor

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Europe's red hole

It's taxes not spending

FEW things are more guaranteed to generate bad publicity for the European Union than the annual report of the Court of Auditors, its watchdog body. This year the 177-page document is particularly interesting because the Court questions the usefulness of the \$600 million earmarked for the repair of decaying nuclear plants in the former Soviet Union. By the end of last year it wasn't possible to say whether there had been any progress in terms of nuclear safety. It looks as though much of the money has been lost, wasted or worse. Even more embarrassingly the Court reports that countries failed to collect VAT amounting to \$50 billion — an amount big enough to have a very significant fiscal impact on all 15 member states. Overall, the Court draws attention to financial mismanagement amounting to 5 per cent of the EU's budget — around \$3 billion — which has not been accounted for. Although it is a relatively small proportion of the total budget it is still a considerable sum which could be spent instead on much better causes such as improving infrastructure or funding venture capital firms to galvanise Europe's technological base. Although these sums are big it is important to keep them in perspective. Mostly the shortfall concerns irregularities rather than outright fraud (the incidence of which has probably been declining since the export subsidy frauds of a decade ago). This doesn't mean it shouldn't be taken very seriously indeed. Misuse of

money is bad in itself and bad for the image of the EU; it also stigmatises the culture of subsidised economic systems like the CAP. Yet it is important not to turn it into an anti-EU crusade. That is for a very good reason: this isn't a problem just affecting "them" in Europe and not "us" in the UK. As the Commission points out, over 80 per cent of EU expenditure — mainly agricultural spending under the CAP and structural grants — is actually managed by member states so it is at them that the bulk of the criticism should be levelled. And, of course VAT is collected not by the EU but by member states — so we should be grateful to the EU for pointing out something that our own governments haven't been so keen to draw our attention to.

It would be interesting to know what an audit of Britain using similar criteria would conclude about the probity of domestic spending by the central government, public bodies and local authorities. At present the monitoring of UK public spending is carried out mainly by the Audit Commission and the House of Commons' Public Accounts Committee and because it is done on a case-by-case basis there isn't any overall figure to compare with the 5 per cent identified by the Court of Auditors.

Europe, to its credit, has been taking steps to put its house in order by clarifying the rules for awarding grants and improving management systems. The EU is also proposing to allow member countries to keep the proceeds if they detect irregularities with EU money on their own turf instead of having to hand them back to the EU as they have to when the Court of Auditors or the Commission does the detective work.

There is one area where the EU could learn from Britain. When the Commons' Public Accounts Committee recommends action there is a legal chain of events to

make it happen. The relationship of the EU's Court of Auditors and the European Parliament is much less clearly defined. It needs to be strengthened in order to make sure that Court findings are carried out. Look on the bright side: if member countries could recoup even 10 per cent of the VAT they are failing to collect from their own citizens it would pay for all the money lost from these alleged irregularities and leave plenty to spare.

Drugs in school

Expulsion is not the answer

THERE certainly ought to be red faces over the Education Minister's appeal to headteachers not to automatically expel pupils in possession of drugs. But the minister herself, Estelle Morris, has no reason to feel embarrassed. In a speech full of common sense, she told the Girls' Schools' Association annual conference that while drugs are a crime, they are also a child welfare problem. The first reaction to drugs of many schools was to adopt a zero tolerance approach. This was often what parents wanted. But some heads would recognise the importance of drawing a distinction between "selling drugs in school and somebody found with cannabis in their pockets". Automatically expelling children from school for all drug offences took no account of the support some children needed.

The reaction has been absurd. John Dunford, the general secretary of the Secondary Heads Association, who accused the minister of undermining school discipline, should hang his head in shame. He declared: "It is very important that heads should continue to have the right to exclude children involved with drugs." Even a primary pupil

who had read the minister's address could have seen that the minister was not withdrawing that right. He went on: "There is enormous pressure from governors and parents to make schools a drug-free zone and the Government should support schools doing that." No they should not for the very reason the minister set out: the welfare of children ought to be taken into account. Mr Dunford needs to read the recent Social Exclusion Unit's report on what happens to children expelled from school: it propels them into a cycle of low education qualifications, increased drug use and high crime. Chucking children out of school is too easy. Schools have wider obligations than just education. Has Dunford not heard of pastoral care? Instead of criticising ministers, he should be prodding his members into drawing up a serious drugs policy: one out of five secondary schools still do not have one.

If Dunford looked foolish, David Willetts the Conservative spokesman was absurd condemning the Government for "undermining the position" of headteachers. Yet what the minister said is almost totally in line with the guidance issued by Conservative ministers three years ago. It declared: "The Secretary of State believes that schools will want to develop a repertoire of responses, incorporating both sanctions and counselling, reflecting the different kinds of drug-related offences." Precisely.

V&A triumphs

Now it's got to find the money

IT IS a very un-British resolution: the IBSies have trounced the Nimbies. Against expectation, and against the recommendation of its own planning officials, the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea has

approved Daniel Libeskind's visionary design for the V&A's Bollerhouse extension. Was this the last cry of Nimbysm? Certainly the planning officials, while praising the design, were clear about where it should be built: somewhere away from the Queen's Gate Conservation area. Somewhere far, far away. Possibly in the middle of a field somewhere north of Watford. But the planning committee fell upon its sword. "Because of the proposal's national importance, it was felt that this transcended the borough's planning policies," explained the chairman. The decision avoids the costly and time-consuming route of a public inquiry and leaves the project to succeed or fail on its own merits, or rather the merits of its funders. For the main question now facing the V&A is where to find the \$75 million to build the ivory-tiled tower. Lottery funding is still available, but the Arts Council of England has made it clear that no awards above \$15 million will be made until after March 2000. There are other Lottery distributors, but the V&A may find itself more dependent than it might like to be on the largesse of a diminishing band of private donors. Private and public donors alike would be justified in asking just what the Spiral is for. If it is a gallery for the display of objects, it is not perhaps the most practical design. But this, surely, misses the point. The Spiral is the gallery as art object, an icon, a declaration not of vacuity but of confidence. We should celebrate not only the defeat of the Nimbies but of Prince Charles and his "Carbunclists". The model here is Frank Gehry's Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao: Gehry's huge structure has turned a rather dull Spanish city into one of Europe's most exciting destinations. Can Libeskind do the same for London? With the sort of government backing Gehry received in Bilbao, it could happen here.

Letters to the Editor

Bible endorses closed lists

DAVID McKie (Watching the Detectives, November 16), suggests a television series involving all the current TV detectives, so that Morse can be the sole survivor after many murders. I remember in the mid-fifties, when BBC radio boasted a similar multitude of detective talent, there was a Saturday Night Theatre broadcast in which all the then favourites were brought together for a weekend house party in a mysterious country house. Dick Barton was there, PCs, even the peerless Paul Temple and numerous others. Their host never showed up, but subjected them to all manner of mortal scares from which only their collective wit could save them. Rev John Ogden, Reading.

ROY Hatterley is quite right (Endpiece, November 16): the Commons is not equipped to hold an informed debate about Lord Irvine's trousers. They do not have his inside Laird measurement. Nick Watts, Chippenham, Wilts.

RE YOUR Leader (Is God a Tyrant? November 17) on Biblical methods of decision-making. Prayer normally preceded the drawing of lots, hence in Acts 1:26 "and the lot fell on Matthias", who replaced the disgraced Judas as the 12th disciple. There were only two candidates and they appear to have been carefully selected. Janet Nightingale, Rowley Regis.

NOT everyone will agree that Jesus would not have been an eager convert to PR. "The first shall be last" may be difficult under A.V. but must be contrary to F.F.T.P. Andrew Horton, Berkhamsted, Herts.

Branson, we blame you

OHNO, Richard Branson (Letters, November 17) it is I who despair! Last week I attempted to buy a ticket using the Virgin Trainline telephone booking service. I wanted to pick up the ticket at Euston that afternoon. However, they said they could not get it there. At Euston I had to queue for half an hour for a ticket, only to be told that Trainline could have faxed the details so that Euston could issue the ticket. I filled out a complaint form. That evening I received a telephone call from Virgin Trainline in Edinburgh apologising. Apparently the ticket could, and should, have been issued in Edinburgh and sent to Euston by road courier! It had to be by road as Virgin don't run trains from Edinburgh. Is it not time to hear Sir George Young's views on the success of his legislation and the creation of the inefficient, fragmented railway? A J Pickering, London.

RICHARD Branson implores us to get behind the 4,000 Virgin Train staff, which makes it such a shame that he

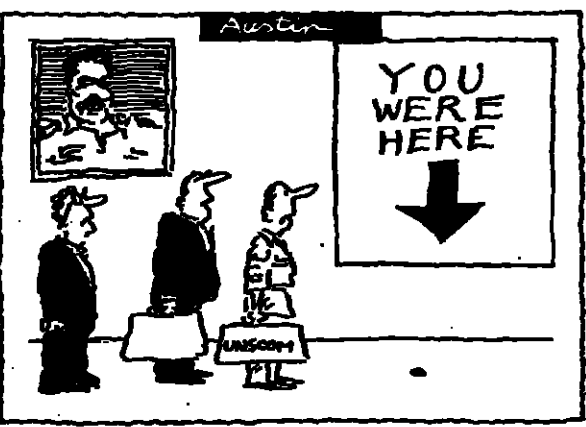
has made so many of them redundant. In 1997/4, BR employed more than 5,000 staff to run the Virgin routes. Using the same trains they ran a far more punctual service. But then that's been the Virgin Trains way — a press release in one hand, redundancy notices in the other. Jennifer Branson, Campaign Director, Save Our Railways.

LET me offer Mr Branson some encouragement. Last Friday I went in to the Virgin information bureau in Crewe to ask for train times. I was impressed by the helpful approach of a young woman who gave me a custom-printed computer listing. I think she tore off a bit that was intended for staff. It came from P (name withheld) at the Better Late Than Never Department, and detailed timings for BR (Brighton?) on Sunday. It ended hoping that other timings would be available later in the day. I quite admire the laid-back style which characterises Branson's management of Virgin staff. But can a rail network be run with a laid-back style? That someone can

joke about working for the Better Late Than Never Department (I'm presuming it was a joke) disguises a complacency which is unacceptable. Dr Paul Fitzpatrick, Heswall, Wirral.

SHARE Mr Branson's despair; the latest of his train times, the increase in prices, the absence of heating, the overcrowding and the state of the toilets. Whilst he feels that that all this criticism is directed at his staff, I can assure him that mine is directed at him. Robert Cressy, Birmingham.

COULD the situation on the railways of Railtrack, leasing companies and train operators ever have arisen by means of the free market? Are we to believe that Brunel could have laid down tracks in the hope that Stephenson might invent something to run on them? With the present clowns in charge we would have got broad gauge track, standard gauge tracks and narrow gauge tracks. John Illingworth, Bradford, Yorks.



Tobacco's latest killing fields

SOUTH Africa is not the first developing country to ban tobacco advertising (Letters, November 16), but such bans are still much more common in industrialised countries. The recent EU Directive will increase the number of industrialised countries with comprehensive advertising bans to around 30, compared with only about eight developing countries. If current trends are allowed to continue, the global death toll will reach 10 million

a year by 2030; seven million of these deaths will be in developing countries. Health campaigners are increasingly demanding global action to tackle global industry — through the International Framework Convention on Tobacco Control. The British Government could lead the way in the forthcoming tobacco White Paper — and help prevent the death projection figures from ever becoming a reality. Emma Must, London.

Fanthorpe for poet laureate: the pressure grows

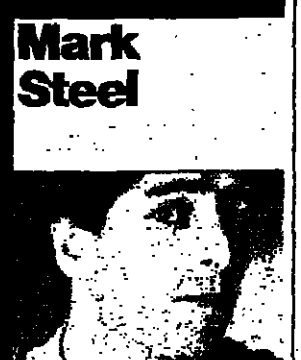
URSULA Fanthorpe made her laureate bid as early as 1984 (Laureate stakes: Fanthorpe moves through the field, November 16). The Windsors: An Everyday Story Of Rural Folk is her accolade to twin British fetishes, the Archers and the royals, down on Old MacDonald's burger farm. With a Grundy here and a Gloucester there, Here a chuckle, there a chicken, Here and there a corge. Mrs Windsor has a farm. God save gracious Dan. The poem was bracketed by Circus Tricks, then Soothing And Awful — Archers and Windsors again? So, no sycophant monarchist she. Mike Freeman, Boulderclough, Halifax.

YOUR leader (November 16) is at odds in tone with your report which addresses the question seriously, whereas

your Leader suggestion that Wendy Cope and U A Fanthorpe could have a gladiatorial contest for the job of laureate trivialises it. I do think you should get your act together as to whether you're taking the matter seriously or not. Certainly Fanthorpe would be a brilliant ambassador for the art of poetry, as those who know her and her work have been aware of all along. But please don't make silly suggestions about choosing the next laureate. We are actually, as a people, rather better at poetry than we are at politics, your serious commitment to which is never in doubt. Eddie Wainwright, Shorewell, Isle of Wight.

We do not publish letters where only an e-mail address is supplied. We may edit letters. We regret we cannot acknowledge those not used. Please provide a reference to the relevant article.

Begorrah off



MORE than privatised railways or Sky Sport, there is one commodity that sums up this free market, New Labour period: the fake Irish pub. These things have sprouted like weeds in every High Street, owned and managed by English brewers, although most decent pubs are already genuinely Irish. It is as daft as if there were chains

of Cypriot theme bars, run by English staff trained to say: "Do you go anywhere a nice for holiday these year sir?" Most real Irish pubs are a delight, with a compulsory lock-in, and a dedicated landlord who's had hardly any contact with life outside his pub since 1964. So the Spice Girls could come in and he'd say: "Hello girls, I've not seen you in here before, so I've got to be putting some more clothes on if I was you, it's getting cold outside now." But the fake ones suddenly appear, all green and yellow with saddles and whips in the window, selling All Ireland Ruling Finales pie and Easter Rising sausage sandwiches. Yet in all the essentials they're the least Irish pubs in the world. Try and get a slightly after hours drink, and you get the familiar glare which makes you realise no-one will ever set up English theme pubs in Kilkenny. Locals would be fascinated as

they politely asked for a drink at half a second past eleven — according to the seven minutes fast clock — and were told: "You've heard the bell, now CLEAR OFF!" Then the windows would be opened as wide as possible and a growling Alsatian released from behind the bar. Let's see if that catches on. Last Saturday afternoon I was refused entry into an empty O'Neill's because I was with my two-year-old son. Can there be anything in this world more un-English than that? I've been in pubs in Dublin where you get funny looks for not having a pushchair. But question the decision and the nature of these places becomes apparent. "It's not me, it's a company decision," you're told. So I rang a series of numbers which led me to O'Neill's centralised customer care department. "The reason our branches don't have a children's licence," I was told, "is that it wouldn't fit the

profile and market we aim for with this particular brand." Then she added: "We recently reinforced this directive to our managers via e-mail." The music, she told me, was centrally chosen as well. Each manager is given tapes to be played at strictly specified points in the day. This must be why you never see a jukebox in O'Neill's. Someone might put on Aretha Franklin during the period in which market research shows the target audience prefers The Kinks. For all we know, focus groups may indicate that this would lead to a 20-minute slump in sales of Cheesy Wotsits. So even if a member of staff smiles at you, it's probably because they've received an e-mail about the November snuffing drive. Just as assembly lines destroy the creativity of factory workers, chains of pubs, hotels and restaurants remove all humanity from their staff and replace it with a soulless corporate

friendliness, otherwise described as rudeness. When the lad at a Pizza parlour says: "Hello, how can I help you with one of our delicious pizzas?" We don't think: "What a nice chap, eager to help me with one of his delicious pizzas." Especially if they only teach him the first line, so if you answer: "I haven't decided yet," he's likely to say: "Well hurry up mate, I'm bleeding busy." AND when you get off an aeroplane to the sound of the poor stewardess repeating: "Thank you for flying with us, we hope you enjoy your stay," over and over, it would be much more friendly if they said something human, like "bet you crapped yourself in the turbulence." Instead, every member of staff is forced to become a jobsword, referring each complaint to a faceless, distant code. A variety of rational corporate reasons were

given by the customer care women for why a two-year-old couldn't be allowed in an empty pub for five minutes. But it's like someone in a cafe justifying why you can have bacon and egg, or bacon and beans, but "we don't do eggs and beans". The only worthwhile response is: "Can't you see — it's bloody MAD!" That's why fake Irish pubs fit the New Labour era. They're devoid of all passion, obsessed with ensuring maximum profit, every action is the result of a focus group, and they're ruled entirely from the top with no room for local initiative or dissent. And it's all presented as innovative and radical. For example, New Labour invites us to enjoy the theme of local democracy, before adding: "Sorry, you can't bring any Ken Livingstones in here. They don't fit the profile and market we aim for with this particular brand you see. Anyway, we haven't got a licence."

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Sadler's Wells

Laurence Gander

A voice against apartheid

IN 1957, as the National Party government in South Africa was getting its teeth into the massive social engineering operation called apartheid, Laurence Gander, a quiet, reserved man with an ascetic profile and piercing hazel eyes, became editor of the Rand Daily Mail, Johannesburg's morning daily. Launched by Edgar Wallace at the turn of the century, it had been chugging along in the style of a British provincial newspaper focusing on the interests of the white, English-speaking establishment with quaint prohibitions on publishing pictures of black people or running stories on them.

As his paper recorded the government's stream of legislation aimed at separating the races in every aspect of social and cultural life, Gander, who has died aged 82, became a leading voice in changing the face of South African journalism. He upset his readers and infuriated the government by denouncing apartheid, pleading for the political emancipation of blacks and urging economic integration.

His was a solitary crusade. He wrote leaders and articles exhorting whites to make the inevitable, ineluctable choice — of either going "the whole hog" of political separation, which would require enormous economic sacrifices, or adopting economic integration, which would demand extensive political concessions. He gathered an enthusiastic band of liberal journalists around him and started to change the backward white mindset. His liberal philosophy of non-discrimination, of freedom, tolerance and justice for all, forcefully injected into the thinking of white South Africans at that time, was ultimately one of the factors that helped to prevent the country from sliding into civil war.

He introduced to South African daily newspapers investigative journalism. He concentrated on exposing the raw consequences of the government's segregation policies, such as the removal of

"black spots" — the uprooting of people from homes they had occupied for generations and transporting them to generally bleak and inhospitable areas of the country — the inequities of the pass laws, under which blacks had to be in possession of identity documents or passes at all times, the sordid conditions under which black people lived in the segregated townships, and the abominable treatment of blacks in prison.

This last subject resulted in 1955 in a series of articles about prison conditions that reverberated around the world, and which resulted in Gander and his reporter, Benjamin Pogrand, undergoing an eight-month trial after which they were convicted and fined (with Pogrand being given a suspended jail term as well).

The authorities had been reluctant to take action against Gander or his paper for fear of the impact on world opinion. But the prison articles gave them the opportunity to vent their anger.

They withdrew Gander's and Pogrand's passports and, on one occasion, thugs fired shots at the Rand Daily Mail offices. But the impact of the exposure — one of the most courageous and far reaching of its kind ever published in South Africa, as well as the most expensive — was international surveillance of the prison system by the Red Cross and the forced revamping of conditions under which prisoners were held.

THESE events, coupled with declining circulation and advertising revenues, upset an already resolute board of directors, who dismissed Gander as editor — only to appoint him editor-in-chief after the staff threatened to revolt, a position he held until 1968. He briefly worked with a human rights group in London and retired in some disillusion to the south coast of Natal.

Laurence Gander was born in Durban and gained a BA degree at Natal University,

after which he joined the Sunday Tribune, and later the Natal Daily News, in Durban, and the Pretoria News, where he was an assistant editor. During the second world war, he served with the Royal Durban Light Infantry in North Africa and Italy, ending up as a brigade intelligence officer with the rank of captain.

In 1953 he joined the public relations office of the mining conglomerate, Anglo American Corporation, in Johannesburg, from where he was plucked by a perceptive general manager of SA Associated Newspapers to edit the Rand Daily Mail.

The only directive he was given was that the Mail traditionally supported the United Party, but he insisted on, and was given, "complete editorial independence" — which he interpreted as giving him the right to support the rebels who left the United Party over an issue of principle and formed the Progressive Party (now, after several mutations, the Democratic Party) in 1959. This helped bring about

Helen Suzman's long tenure as the only liberal voice in parliament, the eventual rise of the party and the final demise of the United Party. Gander won many international awards, the most prestigious being the American Newspaper Publishers' Association world press achievement award after the prison series in 1956. He cultivated a remote image in the newsroom, but when I was editor to his editor-in-chief I found him a warm, friendly and generous spirit, with a captivating and lively sense of humour, a most hospitable host and a man who loved the arts, good food, wine and good companionship.

Gander's wife Isabel, whom he married in 1944, died in 1969, and their only son, Mark, suffered a fatal heart attack at 53 in July, leaving a grandson, Owen.

Raymond Louw

Laurence Owen Vine Gander, journalist, born January 28, 1915; died November 14, 1998



Gander... a solitary crusade to change white South Africa

A O H Jarman

Tales of Arthur

PROFESSOR Alfred Owen Hugh Jarman (almost always known as A O H Jarman or simply Jarman), who has died aged 87, was among the foremost Welsh scholars of the 20th century, one of a dwindling band who flourished under the great Sir Ifor Williams, professor of Welsh at the University of Wales, Bangor.

As an undergraduate, Jarman read for degrees in Welsh and English at Bangor. He was appointed to the chair of Welsh in the Welsh Department, University of Wales, Cardiff in 1957. Through his detailed knowledge of early Welsh literary sources, he did much to clarify and interpret the Welsh origins of the Arthurian legend. He was a prominent member of the British Branch of the International Arthurian Society.

Jarman's name is particularly associated with the legend of Myrddin (known in English sources as Merlin). His painstaking scholarship and meticulous attention to detail were the hallmarks of his scholarly contributions. His edition of the mid-13th-century manuscript known as *Llyfr Du Caerfyrddin* (The Black Book of Carmarthen) is a fine memorial to that scholarship, as is his edition and translation into English of the sixth-century heroic poem, the *Gododdin*, in the Welsh Classics series.

With his wife, Eidda, herself a descendant of the Welsh gypsy family of Abram Wood, Jarman co-authored two volumes on Welsh gypsy history, the first in Welsh in 1973, the second (a much augmented version) in English in 1981.

He was a committed nationalist, a prominent member of Ffyni Cymru and supporter of home rule for Wales. But his commitment was tempered by reasoned argument and debate. Though not a pacifist he refused to enrol during the second world war on grounds of his nationalism, but he was only agreed to join the fight against Hitler on condition that Wales be given political independence. Refusal to enrol on nationalist grounds was not accepted, and he was jailed for a while.

JARMAN was a fierce opponent of the investiture of the Prince of Wales in 1969, which to him, symbolised the subjugation of Wales to the British state. To his students he was a kind of somewhat distant figure. He taught those subjects in which he excelled as a researcher. He believed in close reading of texts with his students, and deplored the modularisation of degree schemes which, in his view, led to an inevitable diminution of course content.

Though not given to small talk, Jarman could be a lively conversationalist on topics that interested him. In his final years, despite an operation for the removal of cataracts, his eyesight failed and he was unable to read. But his mind was lively, and the last time I saw him, some two months before his death, he was enthusiastic about the forthcoming national assembly of Wales, and avid to know of the response in Welsh scholarly circles to a recent study of the *Gododdin*.

Glyn E Jones

Alfred Owen Hugh Jarman, Welsh scholar, born October 8, 1911; died October 28, 1998



Fine boys you are... The Clancy Brothers with (left to right) Tom, Liam, Paddy and Tommy Makem in hallmark Aran sweaters

Paddy Clancy

Songs of orange and green

PADDY CLANCY, the oldest of the Clancy Brothers, who with Tommy Makem were widely credited with the revival of Irish folk music, has died after a long fight against cancer. He was 76. He never lost his zest for performing. Although seriously ill, he sang for spectators at an open-air concert this summer as the Tour de France came through his native Carrick-on-Suir, Co Tipperary.

He was one of 11 children, and left for Canada with his younger brother, Tom, in 1947. They had been in the RAF together. They went to the United States soon afterwards, apparently smuggled across the border in the back of a lorry, and tried their hand at acting.

The first stop was at the Playhouse in Cleveland, Ohio. Tom was more successful, particularly when they went to New York. He played Broadway, supporting Helen Hayes in *Touch of the Poet* and Orson Welles in *King Lear*.

Together the brothers staged Irish plays at the Cherry Lane Theatre in Greenwich Village for three years, but were always struggling to pay the bills. When *The Wise Man Was Spoken* flopped in 1953, they began performing midnight concerts to stave off repossession.

They quickly attracted a loyal following, and were joined in 1956 by their younger brother, Liam. He brought with him Tommy Makem, a fine singer from Northern Ireland, and they drew upon both green and orange ballads to record an album of rebel sentiments.

Paddy set up the Tradition label to issue and distribute the record, and the group decided to try performing for six months. They were still trying to settle on a name when the boss of the Gate of Horn, in Chicago, fed up with waiting for them to make up their minds, bluffed them simply as the "Clancy Brothers and Tommy Makem". As a

result of an appearance at the Blue Angel in New York, they were booked for a minor spot on the Ed Sullivan show. But when the main act failed to appear, the group's three-minute slot stretched to 18 minutes to an audience of 80 million people. It was their big break. President Kennedy

asked them to perform and the renaissance of Irish folk was sealed.

There was some irony in that. The Irish community in New York actually preferred the likes of *Danny Boy* and *When Irish Eyes Are Smiling*, and the group's big support-

ers in their early days were the Jewish community, who would drink with them in the White Horse Tavern.

When Tommy and the brothers came home to Ireland to tour in 1963, they were a sensation. Their albums became bestsellers, and the following year they accounted for almost one third of all record sales in Ireland. Their repertoire included *Fine Girl You Are*, *The Holy Ground* and *The Rambler*. They recorded 55 albums, and performed with Bob Dylan and Barbara Streisand. They played Carnegie Hall, New York, and the Royal Albert Hall; topped the bill at the first Cambridge Folk Festival in 1965, and reunited to perform in 1985 at the 21st festival. Two years ago they put together a farewell tour.

Liam left in 1976. Although Tommy Makem had also gone, in 1989, he and Paddy continued to perform together, along with the younger Clancy brother, Bobby, and a cousin, Robbie

O'Connell, although less successfully. While Tom pursued an acting career — which brought him parts in *The Incredible Hulk*, *Charlie's Angels* and *The Little House on the Prairie* — Paddy tried his hand at farming, raising Cheshires cattle in his native Tipperary. He had a reputation as a progressive farmer.

He never ceased to wear the Aran sweaters, which had been a hallmark of the group's identity, or his cap. Indeed, folk singer Tommy Sands said he was never without the cap, even in the swimming pool. At dress functions, he would wear a black cap. His other great love was pool. Up until his death, he was playing and winning in his local pub.

Clancy leaves a widow, Mary, and children, Leish, Rory, Orla, Maura and Conor.

John Mullin

Pat 'Paddy' Clancy, folk singer, born 1922; died November 10, 1998

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Pierre Martory

Poetic lines lost in France

THE FRENCH poet, journalist and fiction writer Pierre Martory, who has died aged 77, used to say "I love France but I hate ze French". Certainly his poetry does not seem to derive from any of the modernist (or post-modernist) French schools, though there are echoes of fringe surrealists like Reverdy and Raymond Queneau.

There is a touch of the gaiety of Charles Trenet and of René Clair's early films; of his favourite singers, Florel and Piaf. His poem from the early 1950s, *Blues*, epitomises the childish expectancy and the jaundiced spleen of Paris that mingle in his best work.

Pierre Martory was born in Bayonne. His mother, a Basque, died when he was two and he was brought up by his grandparents and aunts. At the age of nine, he was taken to Morocco by his father, a career army officer, who had re-married and told his son that his Bayonne relatives were dead (Pierre was later delighted to find them alive and loving as ever). In the autumn of 1939, Martory entered the School of Political Science in Paris, only to escape the city a few months later on the last train to leave before the Germans arrived.

After crossing the unoccupied zone on foot, and a brief stay in prison in Lyons because his papers were not in order, he joined the Free French forces in Morocco and fought alongside the Allies in the Tunisian campaign.

After the war, Martory suffered from depression, for which he was hospitalised. He drifted through a variety of jobs, eventually joining Paris Match, to which he contributed a weekly page on the arts. Meanwhile, he had published a novel, *Phébus ou le beau mariage* — a Mauriac-like tale of family life in the provinces — in 1953; his editor was the esteemed Robert Kanters.

The book was well-reviewed and promised a successful career as a novelist. But Kanters, a homosexual himself, turned down Martory's second novel because of its homosexual theme. Kanters was willing to publish Martory's third novel but asked him to change the ending, which so infuriated Martory that he withdrew the book. Years later Kanters wondered in his memoirs what happened to the brilliant young writer Martory; Pierre could not resist writing him a note saying that Kanters himself might be able to answer that question.

I first met Pierre in March 1956. We became instant friends and soon began living together, an arrangement that lasted until my reluctant departure from France in 1965.

John Ashbery

Pierre Martory, writer and poet, born December 1, 1920; died October 5, 1998

Thereafter we visited each other often and talked twice weekly on the telephone. He led a solitary life, his main friends a young Moroccan family, whose children, he adored, and Denis Demonplon, now editor of *Le Point*. Another friend was Francis Wishart, with whom Pierre collaborated on a volume of text and etchings entitled *Père Lachaise* — the name of the famous cemetery near where he lived and where his ashes are now scattered.

Every Question but One and a more substantial collection of poems, *The Landscape Is Behind The Door*, were translated into English and published by Sheep Meadow Press in New York. There were some good reviews, and his poetry soon began to appear in *Poetry* (Chicago), *American Poetry Review*, and the *New Yorker*. American colleges and other venues began inviting him to give readings, and he was particularly gratified when a poster at the Institut Français in Boston billed him as "a great poet still undiscovered by the French".

This situation seemed about to change: in 1997



Martory... touch of Piaf

Sheep Meadow Press published *Veilleur de Jours*, a volume of his poems in French, which was to be distributed by Alyscamps Press; then, for unexplained reasons, the distributor dropped the project. Plans are now underway for a new French edition.

Martory suffered a stroke in New York in 1986, which left him slightly lame; another this spring was more severe. He fell frequently; in October, when we last spoke on the telephone, I suggested he get a beeper that would allow him to summon help. He replied: "I'm an old wild wolf. I don't want help. When I die, it'll be an unpleasant affair of 10 minutes; but that'll be all." Scarcely 24 hours later he was found dead.

John Ashbery

Pierre Martory, writer and poet, born December 1, 1920; died October 5, 1998

CORRECTIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS

IN AN extended caption on page 4, yesterday, related to a report headed, Lone parents 'can produce happy children', we said that Jane Austen was brought up by her widowed mother. Hardy Jane Austen was born in 1775; her father died in 1805. She had been an adult for some time.

IN ANALYSIS, World trade, page 19, yesterday, we referred to the Smoot Hawley Act, an American law raising tariffs. It should have been Smoot Hawley.

ON PAGE 2, November 14, we misspelled the name of Aquinas Sixth Form College, Stockport.

PAUL EVANS

IN A SMALL item about a competition to find The biggest liar in the World, page 8, Travel, November 14, we said the contest was held in honour of Will Ranson, an 18th century publican. That should have been Ritson.

It is the policy of the Guardian to correct errors as soon as possible. Readers may contact the office of the Readers' Editor by telephoning 0171 239 5989 between 11am and 5pm, Monday to Friday. Surface mail to Readers' Editor, The Guardian, 119, Farringdon Road, London EC1R 3ER. Fax: 0171 239 5987. E-mail: reader@guardian.co.uk

Birthdays

Margaret Atwood, novelist, 55; James Barrington, director, Wildlife Network, 46; John Boulter, former Olympic runner, 58; Rt Rev Dewi Brindley, Bishop of Swansea and Brecon, 55; Prof Charles Cowan, former director, School of Oriental and African Studies, 75; Linda Evans, actress, 54; Bill Giles, meteorologist, 53; David Hemmings, actor, director, 57; Baroness Jay of Paddington, leader of the Lords and minister for Women, 63; Michael Kustow, arts entrepreneur, 58; Admiral of the Fleet Sir Henry Leach, 75; Lord Mackenzie-Stuart, former president, European Court, 74; Graham

Parker, singer, songwriter, 48; Alan Pryce-Jones, author and critic, 90; Sir Tasker Watkins VC, president, Welsh Rugby Union, 80; Kim Wilde, pop singer, 38.

Death Notices

FARMER Mary (née Welsh), dearly loved wife of Richard, died peacefully in her sleep on Saturday November 14th, aged 90 years. Service and interment at Woburn Cemetery, Sandbury Road, Woburn on Thursday November 19th at 2.30pm. Family flowers only please, donations if desired, sent to The Old Rectory, 100, High Street, Woburn, Bedfordshire, MK34 2JL. To place your announcement telephone 0171 735 4667 or fax 0171 735 4707 between 9am and 5pm Mon-Fri.

سازمان اطلاعات

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Telephone: 0171-238-9610
Fax: 0171-833-4456

FinanceGuardian

Industrial group targets partner for decisive re-direction into telecoms

GEC in French connection

Alex Brummer and David Gow

B RITAIN'S largest industrial and electronics group, GEC, is considering a decisive change of direction in an effort to become a world-class player in the communications industry by forging a strategic alliance or even merging with the French telecoms group Alcatel.

It is understood that GEC's chief executive Lord Simpson held exploratory talks with potential French partners, including Alcatel, in Paris at the weekend. GEC and Alcatel already share equal stakes of 25 per cent in the Anglo-French engineering group Alstom, their joint venture, half of which they floated in June. This partial sell-off netted GEC around \$1 billion.

Brokers Salomon Brothers recently put a value of \$13.5 billion on Alcatel's telecoms businesses, which include optic fibre and network cables, telecoms sub-systems and undersea cables. GEC is becoming increasingly frustrated in its efforts to expand its defence electronics interests in both Europe, where the rival British Aerospace is leading the

drive for consolidation, and the United States. Insiders now believe that it may have to reduce these interests. The company's decision in June to buy back for \$700 million Siemens' 40 per cent share in GPT, the jointly owned telecoms system provider, has given GEC a new impetus to expand in the telecoms market, however. It has also opened negotiations with Korean players over a possible deal.

The company found that the Siemens partnership, forged by Lord Walbrook in 1990, was proving too restrictive and excluded GPT from potentially important contracts including a \$300 million deal with Belgacom — the Belgian telecoms group. Marconi Communications, which was formed from GPT and GEC's Marconi subsidiary in Italy, believes that there is an opportunity for it to become an important player in the burgeoning market for data transmission and internet equipment. Engineers from the two companies are working flat out to develop software and products.

If GEC successfully forged a deal with Alcatel, the internet equipment market could be looking at a serious player. Alcatel is already working closely with Cisco Systems, the fast growing US provider of routers for the internet. Earlier this week, six European defence and aerospace firms led by BAE, Aerospatiale of France and Germany's DASA, submitted a confidential new plan to governments for creating a single company to take on American rivals such as Boeing and Lockheed Martin.

GEC, which is still pursuing talks with BAE on a possible merger, now fears that the proposed European Aerospace and Defence Company (EADCo), if formed, could expand its interests beyond building "platforms", such as planes, into defence electronics, the growing core of modern military systems. France is rapidly consolidating its state and privately owned defence firms but has excluded foreign companies, including GEC, from bidding for parts of this such as Thomson-CSF, the defence electronics group in which Alcatel has a stake.

GEC is now America's sixth-largest defence contractor after its \$283 million purchase of the electronics firm Tracor earlier this year but it is uncertain of future expansion prospects given Pentagon opposition to opening up secret defence contracts to non-US firms.

Notebook

Federal Reserve points the way



Edited by Alex Brummer

THE third quarter-point cut in the Federal Reserve's key market interest rate in as many months reflects the depth of the concern by the chairman, Alan Greenspan, about the global financial system. The turmoil in emerging economies may have eased for the time being but the Federal Reserve still takes the view that the "unusual strains" in financial markets persist.

Moreover, the Fed which in public appeared to harbour fears that overheating in the US economy might lead to a new bout of inflation, has put those firmly behind it, emphasising that the latest change in rates is consistent with both growth and low inflation.

The Fed move does not automatically mean that Britain will follow suit and reduce rates immediately, after the half-point cut by the bank of England's monetary policy committee two weeks ago. However, with the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development forecasting that Britain's growth could be as low as 0.8 per cent next year — a figure more prudent than the Chancellor Gordon Brown in his pre-budget report — there is good reason to believe that UK rates will be heading steadily down too.

The OECD is forecasting 5 per cent base rates by the year 2000. There is one catch in the Federal Reserve's strategy. It is two years since Greenspan started to warn of over-exuberance in equity markets. That has continued more or less unabated but for the setback this summer, which has now been recovered. The strength of the United States stock markets is the one factor which is holding up confidence and consumption in the US economy, at a time when the savings rate has collapsed. If share prices were to go into retreat again, with a major correction, then the US could face a severe recession.

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However, restoring confidence at Warburg Dillon Read will not be that easy. The cost review and efficiency checks suggest that there will be more jobs to go in London beyond 2,000 already lost as a result of the merger. Restoring confidence after the recent shocks will be a challenge for a Swiss management not renowned for its people skills.

Swiss miss

THE nine-month figures from UBS — now officially Europe's largest bank — could not be much worse with overall profits down by 32 per cent. Had the hurricane which has hit UBS since the combination of old UBS, SBC and investment bankers Warburg Dillon Read — hit a less well-capitalised institution, the reputation of Swiss banking for safety could have been holed forever.

As matters stand, UBS has a reasonable hope of putting Humpty Dumpty back together again in the current quarter. The combination of interest-rate cuts in many

Fall in scratchcard sales

hits profits at Camelot

Julia Finch

A HUGE drop in the sales of instant scratchcards has hit profits at lottery operator Camelot. Just 13.5 million of the £1-a-go instant-win cards are now being sold each week, down from nearly 18 million a year ago and 44 million when the cards were launched in March 1996. The sales downturn, which Camelot insists is in line with the experience of all other lottery scratchcards worldwide, was revealed as the group unveiled half-year profits down nearly 12 per cent from £38.5 million to £34 million. Ticket sales for the main on-line twice-weekly draw rose by £23 million over the 24 weeks to the middle of September but the improvement was not enough to offset the slumping sales of instant cards. Total sales of the two

games dipped to £2.43 billion, from £2.46 billion a year ago. Lottery players won £2.8 billion from the 48 draws held over the past 24 weeks, while the amount raised for good causes was stable at £835 million — including £696.3 million from ticket sales, £38 million of unclaimed prizes and a £100 million prize-fund shortfall payment made by Camelot when its payouts are less than the lottery licence dictates. At the same time, the Treasury received £309 million in lottery duty and other taxes and Camelot's four corporate shareholders — Cadbury Schweppes, security printers De La Rue, computer group ICL and Rascal Electronics — received an interim dividend of £23 million. For De La Rue in particular, the downturn in profits could not have come at a worse time.

TOURIST RATES — BANK SELLS			
Australia 2.54	Germany 2.71	Malaysia 6.32	Singapore 2.72
Austria 19.00	Greece 454.10	Malta 0.906	South Africa 8.867
Belgium 55.35	Hong Kong 12.55	Netherlands 3.05	Spain 125.52
Canada 2.29	India 70.95	New Zealand 2.88	Sweden 13.10
Cyprus 0.795	Ireland 1.05	Norway 12.13	Switzerland 2.25
Denmark 10.35	Israel 8.57	Portugal 274.52	Turkey 472.988
Finland 8.252	Italy 2.555	Saudi Arabia 5.064	USA 1.004
France 5.554			



Wheels of fortune... the British Racing Drivers' Club has received a \$41 million offer for the track, but says it is worth £70 million

PHOTOGRAPH: TOM JENKINS

Drivers' club members to get payout if Silverstone sold

Julia Finch

EIGHT hundred members of the British Racing Drivers' Club, including grand prix stars Damon Hill and Johnny Herbert, veteran racers Stirling Moss and Paddy Hopkirk and television commentator Murray Walker, could get payouts of nearly \$30,000 each from the sale of the Silverstone circuit.

The BRDC, which owns Silverstone, confirmed at the weekend that it has received a \$41 million bid for the track and the land around it. The club has written to members out-

lining the offer from John Lewis, a former employee, with financial backing from HSBC Private Equity. It is understood that the BRDC believes the circuit, which has been the permanent home of the British Grand Prix since 1983, should be valued at nearer £70 million, equal to £27,500 per member. The club hopes that publicising Mr Lewis's offer might prompt higher bids.

If Silverstone is sold, hundreds of BRDC members might receive two payments next year. Many are also members of the Royal Automobile Club, which is selling its breakdown division, with the proceeds go-

ing to its 12,000 members. The RAC payout will total \$35,000 per member. The club, led by Lord Hesketh, the former Formula One race team boss, has appointed Dresdner Kleinwort Benson, the investment bankers, and Slaughter & May, the City lawyers, to advise it. One of the club's City advisers said: "Other bidders will probably come forward."

Silverstone, a former RAF airfield, has a turnover of £30 million a year, with half generated by the annual grand prix. It is expected to make £4 million profit this year. Any formal sale proposal will be controversial. Hill

and Jackie Stewart, former world champions, have already voiced concerns that a sale could endanger the future of Silverstone as a racing venue. Until recently, the 800-acre estate around the circuit had only limited development potential because of poor road links, but a bypass has been approved to give access to the M1 and M40. This will boost land values. Walker and John Watson, who won the British Grand Prix in 1981, have said that the prospect of big cash handouts would be a powerful incentive to members. Watson, a former BRDC board member, said a sale was inevitable.



Racing greats... Damon Hill (left) and Stirling Moss

Fear grips City as jobs axed amid big losses

Janice Warman

MORE redundancies in the City are feared after three investment banks announced massive losses and job cuts. Turbulent trading worldwide was yesterday blamed by Nomura International, UBS and HSBC Midland for the latest upheavals in the Square Mile.

Nomura International, the London unit of Nomura Securities, Japan's largest securities firm, said it would announce job cuts today after interim losses of £269 million. The bank disclosed in October that it wanted to cut operating costs by 20 per cent after announcing losses incurred by the London unit, with 1,110 staff.

UBS, which is the world's second largest bank and the parent of investment bank Warburg Dillon Read, the investment bank posted a third quarter loss of \$791 million (£407 million), prompting rumours of further job cuts in

London, where losses amounted to \$1.23 billion. The bank is Europe's largest after its merger with Swiss Banking Corporation at the beginning of this year. It was the victim of tumbling shares, troubled emerging markets, the collapse of the Long Term Capital Management hedge fund and provisions for payments to Holocaust victims. The news caused rumours of further job losses among Warburg's 4,500 London staff in addition to those announced after the merger.

Warburg would not comment except to say that redundancies would be "piecemeal" if implemented. HSBC Holdings has cut 60 jobs in the dealing area of its HSBC Midland treasury, foreign exchange and capital markets operation in London because "changing market conditions". Twenty dealers will leave immediately. HSBC Midland employs 1,345 staff globally, with 1,500 in London. Earlier this month, Barclays Capital shed 120 further

jobs, 75 in London and 45 in New York, bringing the latest round of redundancies to 250 staff worldwide and Liffe, the London futures trading exchange, announced more than 600 job losses. The announcement yesterday did not come as a surprise. UBS posted a profit warning in September. "UBS remains committed to the investment banking business," said Marcel Ospel, president and group chief executive officer. Mathis Caballavetta, the chairman, and three senior executives resigned last month, after an internal audit found "shortcomings in risk management" process before and after the merger. The resignations came two months after UBS and Credit Suisse Group, its biggest Swiss rival, agreed to pay \$1.25 billion (\$708 million) to Holocaust survivors over three years for keeping victims' assets and as restitution for Switzerland's role as a financial centre for the Nazis during the Second World War.

Barclaycard cuts rates

Patrick Collinson

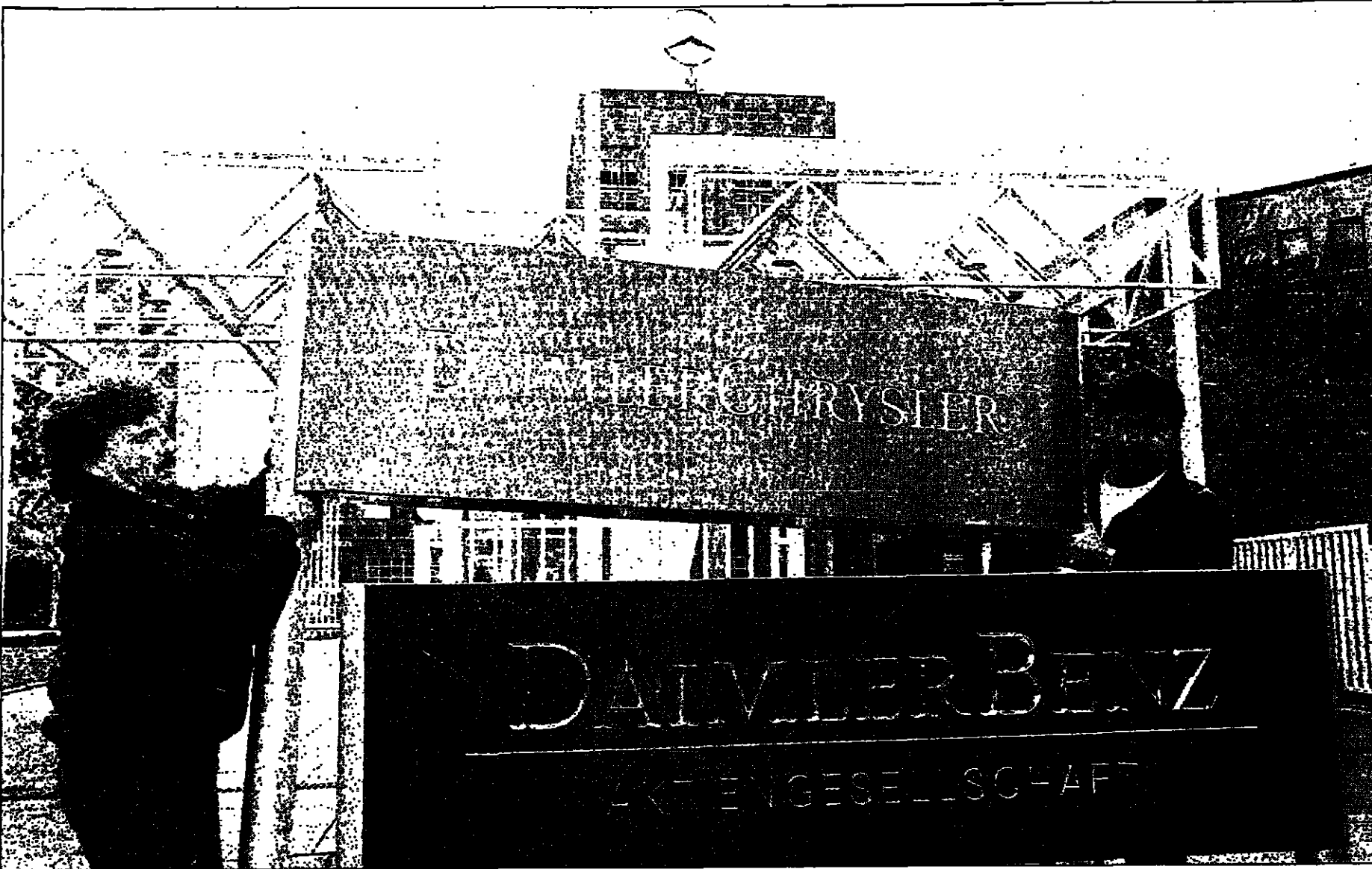
BARCLAYCARD has abandoned its stand against low-cost credit cards and slashed interest rates to as low as 9.9 per cent in an attempt to recover market share from new, largely American, card providers. The card company, which has 8.5 million customers, has until now dismissed introductory rates as marketing tools which offer a "honeymoon" period followed by higher rates and hidden charges. But it emerged yesterday that Barclaycard is now mailing existing customers to entice them to ditch any rival cards they have and switch to Barclaycard, with a new head office in Nottingham and creating 1,000 jobs. A spokesman says: "For the last

two years Barclaycard has been telling people to beware our rates and not trust us. Now here they are coming out with something similar, and it's nowhere near as good." Barclaycard cut its standard APR from 22.9 per cent to 21.9 per cent after the last cut in Bank of England base rates two weeks ago. Coop Advantage, which charges 13.8 per cent on its card, said: "We see this as a heavyweight entering the ring with a featherweight offering."

Plastic charges

Interest rates % APR	Introductory rate %	Standard rate %
Nationwide Visa	9.9	13.9
Capital One	9.9	16.5
Abbey National	6.9	17.9
Barclaycard	9.9	21.9
Lloyds	16.4	22.5

Champagne send-off at marriage of opposites



Workers change the name plate at Daimler HQ in Stuttgart as the share launch formally merges Germany's largest manufacturing company with Chrysler PHOTOGRAPH: NORBERT FOEBSTERLING

Daimler debut sparkles but fails to fizz

Nicholas Bannister, Chief Business Correspondent

THE WORLD'S fifth largest car maker made its stock market debut yesterday, amid a burst of excitement. The merger of DaimlerChrysler according to its executives — is as sparkling as the champagne quaffed to celebrate the first trading of its shares on 19 markets around the world.

The celebrations mark the end of the complex financial operation which has merged Daimler-Benz, Germany's and Europe's largest manufacturing group, with Chrysler Corporation, America's third largest car maker.

But now the real work begins, and industry experts are concerned that the executives of the new company will find the task of merging the cultures of the two corporations harder than merging the shares.

Jürgen Schrempf and Robert Eaton, architects and co-chairmen of the new enterprise, presided over the festivities and first trading of DaimlerChrysler shares in Germany before flying to the United States,

where they struck the bell which signalled the start of trading on the New York Stock Exchange.

Their strategy seeks to marry Chrysler's modern manufacturing methods and technology with the quality of Daimler's Mercedes. In practice, this means bringing together Chrysler's fast, informal and flexible style with Daimler's formal, insular and methodical culture.

The reality is that Chrysler's 110,000 employees make about 3 million vehicles a year while Daimler's 177,000 car workers produce about 1.2 million. The directors of the new combine are expecting \$1.4 billion (2840 million) in savings next year and annual savings of more than \$3 billion within three to five years.

Mr Eaton, on the eve of the first trading in DaimlerChrysler shares, said the company would be the leading car maker within three years. "This is the beginning of the No. 1 transport company in the world," Markets were more cautious. DaimlerChrysler shares rose by 3 per cent during the first day.

Leading economists say interest rates must come down further to ward off full-blown recession

World growth forecast cut

Larry Elliott and Charlotte Denny

THE West's leading economic think tank last night cut its forecasts for world growth next year and urged policymakers to keep lowering interest rates in an effort to head off recession.

Cutting its growth forecast for 29 leading economies from 2.5 per cent to 1.7 per cent, the Paris-based Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development said that in the United States and the euro area, "Monetary policy should remain biased towards easing, as inflation risks have been considerably reduced or become non-existent."

The OECD lowered its estimate of British economic growth next year from 1.8 per cent to 0.8 per cent, compared to the Treasury's prediction of expansion of between 1 per cent and 1.5 per cent.

Economists at the 29-nation think tank also believe that the UK will recover much more slowly than the Govern-

ment expects, with growth of 1.5 per cent in 2000 against Gordon Brown's estimate of 2.25-2.75 per cent.

The OECD warned that the main risk to the UK was from possible effects of the slump in Japan and the rest of Asia, which could send financial markets crashing and affect confidence. But it also warned the Bank of England

of the potential dangers of keeping interest rates too high for fear of a wage-price spiral.

"The main domestic risk is a potential over-estimation of near-term labour-market tightness and corresponding wage pressures which could delay further reductions in the repo rate, with a higher likelihood of recession later."

"The challenge facing policy has shifted from orchestrating a needed slowdown in growth, towards avoiding un-

necessarily low growth." Releasing its half-yearly Economic Outlook, the OECD said that the prospects had improved slightly over the past two months as a degree of stability had returned to financial markets.

However, the report said: "While the possibility of a generalised recession may have diminished, a number of

the downside risks to the outlook are still present."

The OECD highlighted four separate threats to the global economy — a resurgence of protectionism; a meltdown in the Japanese banking system; a failure to cut interest rates quickly enough; and the risk of financial contagion spreading to South America.

While the economies in Europe and North America have remained robust, "confidence in many countries has begun to be adversely influenced by the extent and duration of the crisis, as well as the diminishing prospects for any early turnaround," the

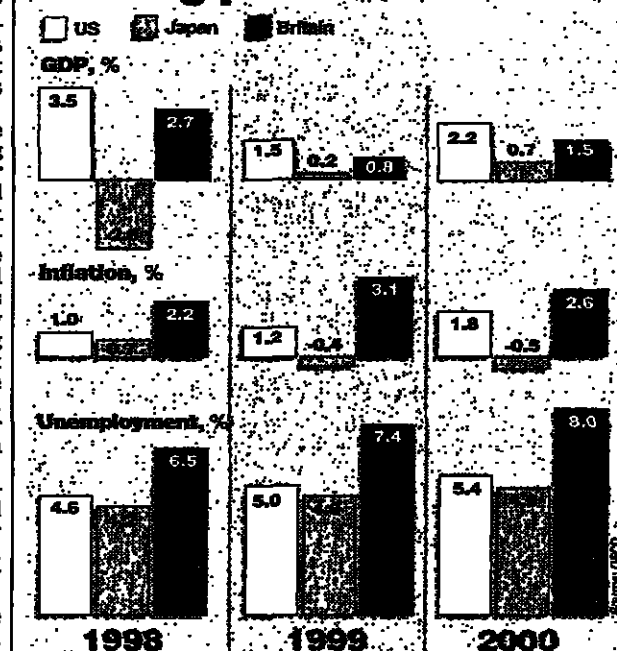
report said. "Financial turbulence has now spread to the point where few, if any countries remain untouched." "Financial turbulence has now spread to the point where few, if any countries remain untouched."

The OECD said that in the three main western trading blocs growth would be slower in 1999 than it had predicted before Russia's debt default triggered a second wave of financial turbulence. Despite the fiscal package announced earlier this week, Japan's economy is expected to grow by only 0.2 per cent following a contraction of 2.6 per cent this year. In summer, the think tank had pencilled in growth of 1.3 per cent for Japan next year and only a small recession in 1998.

The United States — hitherto the engine of world growth — is expected to suffer a marked slowdown in growth next year from 3.5 per cent to 1.5 per cent.

With the advent of the single currency a mere six weeks away, the OECD said that European Union prospects were now weaker than it had forecast in the summer. The OECD is expecting 2.2 per cent against 2.8 per cent this year, leaving the un-

The big picture



employment rate stuck at more than 10 per cent. The OECD is expecting British interest rates to fall to just over 5.1 per cent by 2000, as part of a global trend towards cheaper money. British inflation is expected to be in line with the Government's 2.5 per cent target.

Store sales keep inflation down

Charlotte Denny

RETAIL inflation is plummeting thanks to a bout of season sales which helped the Government reach its 2.5 per cent target for underlying inflation in October for the third month in a row.

Separate figures show that the Government is on course to meet its target of repaying \$4.3 billion of debt this financial year after a record surplus of taxes over spending last month.

The price of goods rose 1.1 per cent in the 12 months to October, a statistician at the Office for National Statistics said — the lowest annual increase since the series began in January 1997. Excluding food, drink, tobacco and other erratic items, goods prices have been falling since June.

"Our estimates suggest that retail goods prices have not been weaker for at least 25 years," said Michael Saunders of Salomon Smith Barney. "Clothing and footwear prices were particularly

soft, falling 1.1 per cent year on year after a 4 per cent drop in September.

The headline rate of inflation, which adds in mortgage interest payments, fell to 3.1 per cent in the 12 months to October, from 3.2 per cent the previous month. The main upward pressure on inflation came from the introduction of university tuition fees.

The record \$8 billion surplus in government revenue over spending last month helped to put the Government's overall position for the first seven months of the financial year into the black.

Since April the cumulative public sector net cash requirement — the old public sector borrowing requirement — is \$5.3 billion in surplus. The Government achieve a debt repayment this year for the first time in nearly a decade. About 28,000 Ford workers will receive an above-inflation 4.25 per cent rise, the second stage of a two-year pay deal, the company said yesterday. The rise is not expected to affect settlements elsewhere.

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Fresh blow to Japanese pride

Jonathan Watts in Tokyo

IN A fresh blow to Tokyo's economic pride, Moody's cut Japan's debt ratings yesterday so adding to risks of a year-end credit squeeze for its financial institutions.

The respected American credit-rating service, which assesses the ability of companies and nations to repay their debts, relegated Japan's securities and foreign currency ratings for bonds, bank notes and deposits from the top grade of AAA to AAL.

Moody's also downgraded to AAL the Japan Develop-

ment Bank, the Finance Corporation of Local Public Enterprise, Nippon Telegraph and Telephone and three power companies.

Moody's cited uncertainty and increased risk in the long term for Japan due to economic and policy weaknesses which have caused deterioration in government finances and the domestic financial system.

The decision was announced a day after the Japanese government revealed a record 23.9 trillion yen (£120 billion) stimulus package. To finance it, Tokyo announced a decision to borrow

heavily via the bond markets, adding to an already enormous public debt.

Japanese monetary authorities responded with disbelief and anger to the downgrade. Central bank governor Masaru Hayami questioned whether Moody's had taken into account Japan's vast net foreign assets. The vice-finance minister, Etsuko Sakakibara, known as Mr Yen for his influence on the currency markets, said that Moody's would lose credibility by making such a decision.

The currency and stock markets were little moved. The yen and the Nikkei index

slipped temporarily before regaining ground. Bond prices, however, fell sharply.

Analysts forecast that the downgrade will make it more difficult for Japanese banks to secure foreign currency loans, adding to the pressure on an already weak financial system. The knock-on effects are expected to push several construction companies into bankruptcy.

Anticipating such risks, the Bank of Japan warned in its latest report yesterday of a credit crunch at the end of this year, in addition to the continued deterioration of the economy.

Gas group shake-up leads to 400 extra job casualties

Nicholas Bannister, Chief Business Correspondent

BOC, the industrial gases group in the process of shedding 3,700 jobs under a radical shake-up of operations, yesterday announced that a further 400 jobs are to go. Chief executive Danny Rosenkranz said the losses were likely to be in the Asia-Pacific region where extra restructuring opportunities had been identified since the reorganisation was announced in August.

The new cuts mean that one in eight jobs in the group will have gone by March 2000. Mr Rosenkranz said that 1,150 staff had left BOC subsidiaries, with a further 2,950 to go over the next 16 months, while 200 of the 1,200 people expected to leave associate companies or joint ventures had also gone.

BOC is seeking to accelerate sales growth and cut costs by selling or closing operations which are not part of, or closely linked to, its core gases business. The group has decided to delay payment of its first interim dividend next year until after the abolition of Advance Corporation Tax in April 1999. The two-month delay will save BOC about £18.9 million.

Mr Rosenkranz said that shareholders would be compensated for the delay by a 0.5p per share increase in the dividend to 16.7p.

The group's 1997/98 results, reported yesterday, are distorted by a £292.8 million charge — mainly to cover restructuring costs and write-downs of goodwill and fixed assets after a strategic review of the business — and a £144 million profit on the sale of its Ohmeda health care operation.

Slash North Sea taxes or face jobs 'bloodbath', say oil firms

Terry Macallister

OIL companies will press the Government to slash North Sea taxes when the two sides meet on an industry-government Task Force set up yesterday by Peter Mandelson, the Trade and Industry Secretary.

Senior oil executives said last night that unless there were significant fiscal changes, or a surge in crude prices, there would be a "bloodbath" of job losses and asset sales.

The Government barely two months ago completed a review of North Sea taxes and backed down on proposed increases. Since then oil prices have slid further, and the value of offshore fields has tumbled.

Mr Mandelson has put John Battle, the energy

minister, in charge of the task force with senior civil servants from the Treasury and the Environment Department. "I will not stand back and watch a decline of the UK oil and gas industry under the impact of the low oil price," Mr Mandelson said. But he indicated that he expected cost cutting by the oil industry rather than fiscal changes.

James May, director general of the UK Offshore Operators Association, which is also represented on the task force, said fiscal issues must be tackled with decommissioning and licensing. Trade unions are angry about being excluded. Roger Lyons, general secretary of the MSF union, said: "It's essential that the interests of the workforce in oil and gas are represented at every level of discussion about the future of the industry."

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Golf

Rose attempts to blossom again

Michael Britten at San Roque on the young professional hoping to show his performance in the Open was no fluke

At 21 and still rising, Justin Rose is becoming accustomed to looking down on the rest of those struggling to make a name for themselves in professional golf. Since he captured the imagination of the golf world and millions of enthralled spectators in his last days as an amateur by tying for fourth place in the Open, the 18-year-old from Hampshire, in Spain this week for the PGA European Tour Qualifying School, has rivalled Michael Owen for the title of the most talked-about teenager in British sport.

Television and radio live interviews with this extremely personable young man who has already occupied almost as many columns in the *Sunday Times* as Liverpool and England's goal-scoring.

Last week he signed a contract with Dunlop Maxfli to play with their ball, which will reward him with more than £500,000 over the next three years — nice work for a rookie who has not yet made his name in his eight tournaments as a professional since his heroics at Royal Birkdale in July.

Some regard the Maxfli deal as a shrewd investment in outstanding potential. Others see it as a risky gamble on a so far unproven talent. Shortly before 9.00am

unique. It is going to be tough and I respect it," he says. "But I feel confident I will get my card. I know I have to try my hardest to get on with the job at hand. This is all that matters now, and at the end of the day it is all down to me."

Rose is likening his school challenge to that glorious Open week. "I played with Ernie Els and Nick Faldo in practice, then had four rounds of the Championship, and I want to make it six here as well," he said. "For a time after that I was not in control of my life but I have put all those missed cuts behind me, and my preparation over the last three weeks has been very relaxing."

"I have been practising at my North Hants club, and just playing nine holes here and there. I know my game has to progress but the way I am going about it is the best for me. Everything has to improve, but I am getting close."

One player who won't be with Rose in Spain is the Maylands assistant Darren Parker, who has withdrawn after suffering a broken left arm and having 42 stitches in his hand wound after a car crash on the notorious N340 between Algeciras and Marbella last Sunday night.

His caddy Ian Davidson is in hospital in Malaga after fracturing his skull and breaking both wrists in the same accident in which another professional, Robert Coles, together with his caddy Gary Tiltson, escaped with severe bruising.

After a separate accident 24 hours earlier, the Australian caddy Stuart Dryden was detained in hospital with severe chest bruising and a cut face.

The Frenchman Olivier Etmond has become the 34th recipient of the coveted Sir Henry Cotton Rookie of the Year award on the European tour. The 20-year-old, who came through the tour's qualifying school at the first attempt, was joint second in the Peugeot French Open and kept his card for 1999 by finishing 54th on the Order of Merit with 228.289.



Testing time... Justin Rose is aiming for a European Tour place. PHOTOGRAPH BY DAVID CANNON

Record since the Open

Volvo Scandinavian Masters	71, 75; missed cut	76th
BMW International Open	70, 79; missed cut	128th
Oranienburg British Masters	80, 70; missed cut	118th
Ford South Australian Open	77, 75; missed cut	

Racing

Suny can do the business at Haydock again

Ron Cox

SUNY BAY, 20-1 for the Cheltenham Gold Cup, can shake up the ante-post market by repeating last year's victory in the Edward Hamner Memorial Chase at Haydock this afternoon.

The state of the ground will always determine Suny Bay's chance on the day at Cheltenham — he must have it soft — but in terms of ability he is up there with the best of them.

Victory over See More Business, the Gold Cup second-favourite, and Escartefigue, 10-1 for Cheltenham, on the cards if Suny Bay is in the same sort of form as this day 12 months ago when he romped home by 11 lengths from General Wolfe, with See More Business another seven lengths away third.

Reports from Lambourn are positive about the grey, who went on to win the Hennessy by 13 lengths last season. There were excuses for Suny Bay's subsequent defeats in the King George and Gold Cup and he bounced back at Aintree with a magnificent second under 12st in the Grand National.

See More Business, held up when third behind Suny Bay here last year, is expected to have more use made of him this time. He comprehensively turned the tables on Suny Bay (fourth) when landing the King George at Kempton, but the latter was patently below form and is more effective on left-handed tracks.

Carried out before the seventh fence in last season's Gold Cup, See More Business

is inclined to spoil his chance by sloppy jumping and was fortunate to survive an almost blunder four out in the Pillar Property Chase at Cheltenham.

Escartefigue was one of last season's top staying novices, but is in danger of being overrated on the strength of his Martell Cup defeat of Simply Dashing and The Grey Monk in desperate conditions at Aintree.

He may always require testing ground to take on the best, but should not be written off on the basis of last month's Wetherby fourth behind Strath Royal in a farcically slow race.

At level weights Strath Royal finished only around seven and a half lengths behind Suny Bay in last season's Gold Cup. But Cheltenham came too quickly for Suny Bay after a troubled preparation and the ground was against him. A line of form through General Wolfe suggests he has nothing to fear from Strath Royal.

The Grey Monk, never quite at his best last term, has turned in some good performances in small fields round here but that is generally because he has been able to dominate. The role promises to go to Suny Bay (2.50).

At Kempton, the promising North Kilkenny (1.40), not knocked about when third to Lord Of The River and Ocean Hawk at Exeter, can boost his stable's excellent record in places at the Stumby track.

There are several dark ones in the seller at Hereford, and any market move for Zee Davison's Summer Flower (2.00) would be significant.

National on top of the world

THE Martell Grand National has shored up its position as the richest National Hunt race in the world with next year's contest offering a guaranteed minimum value of £250,000. The purse represents an increase of over £50,000 on last year's total prize money of £388,050, of which over £100,000 went to the winner Earth Summit. "So far as the Martell Grand National is concerned it is the premier race in the calendar," said Aintree's managing director Charles Barnett.

Kempton

NON COX	TOP FORM
1.05 2.10 2.40 2.50 3.45	1.05 2.10 2.40 2.50 3.45

1.05 RACING FOR GAIN CONDITIONAL JOCKEYS NOVICE HANDICAP

1.05 2.10 2.40 2.50 3.45	1.05 2.10 2.40 2.50 3.45
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2.10 EBF NOVICE HANDICAP (QUALIFIER)

2.10 3.10 4.10 5.10 6.10	2.10 3.10 4.10 5.10 6.10
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3.45 CHRISTMAS AT KEMPTON - BOOK NOW HANDICAP

3.45 4.45 5.45 6.45 7.45	3.45 4.45 5.45 6.45 7.45
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Haydock Jackpot card with form guide

NON COX	TOP FORM
1.20 1.50 2.20 2.50 3.20 3.55	1.20 1.50 2.20 2.50 3.20 3.55

1.20 CALEDONIA RENAULT FLEET NOVICE

1.20 2.20 3.20 4.20 5.20	1.20 2.20 3.20 4.20 5.20
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1.50 MASON COMMUNICATIONS HANDICAP

1.50 2.50 3.50 4.50 5.50	1.50 2.50 3.50 4.50 5.50
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2.20 ST HELENS HANDICAP

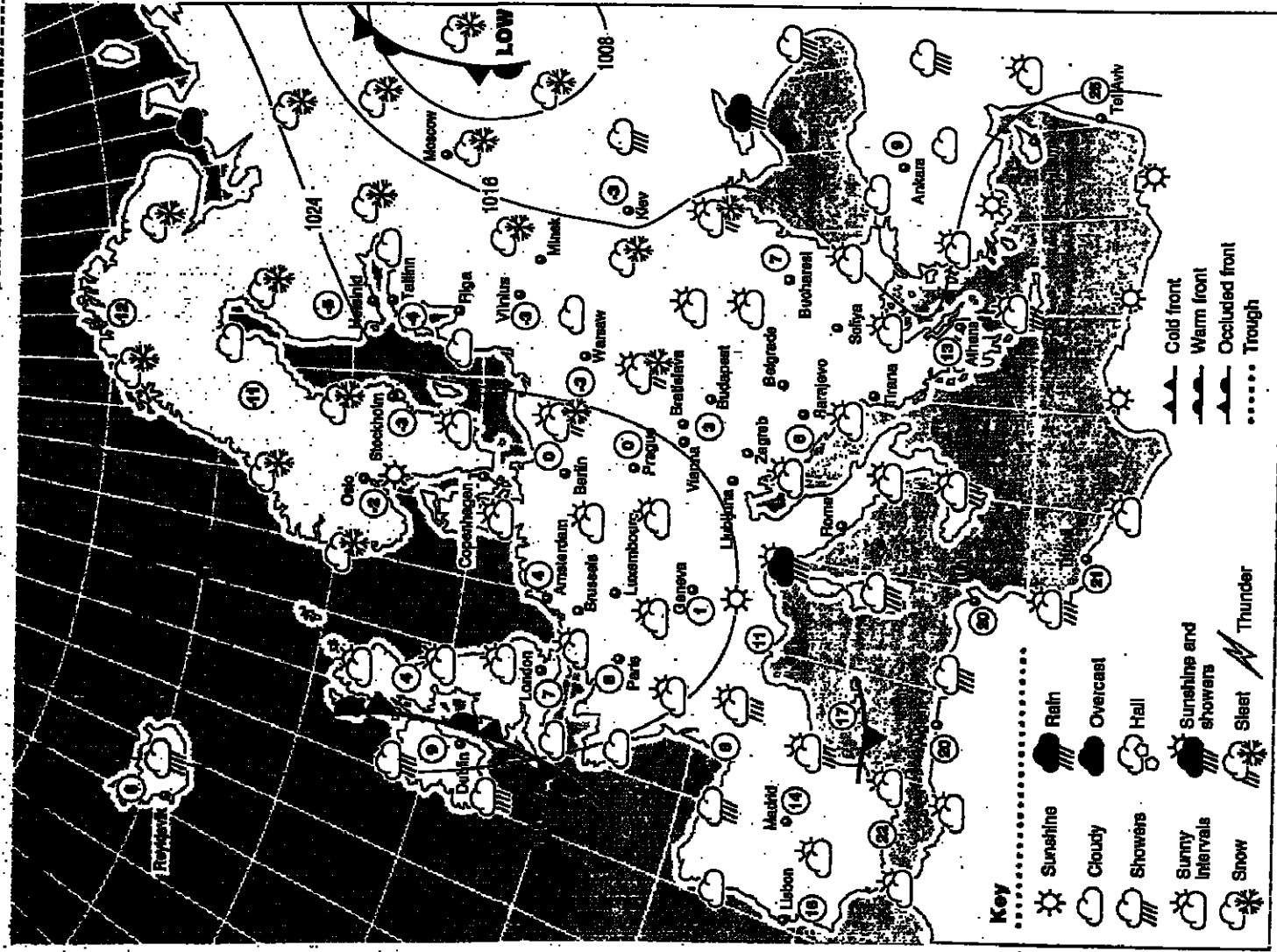
2.20 3.20 4.20 5.20 6.20	2.20 3.20 4.20 5.20 6.20
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Hereford runners and riders

NON COX		TOP FORM	
1.00	Fuero Real	12	20-045 The Gold N Ten (B) A Archer 5-1-7
1.30	Master Bomber	530-20	5-1-4 (A) Archer 5-1-7
1.60	Steeple	46-000	Redd Werry Miles (A) G Brigsford
1.90	Steeple	10	5-1-4
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APPROX

The weather in Europe



European weather outlook

Continued from page 1. A cold front moving from the north and a warm front from the south, with an occluded front and trough in between. Major cities like London, Paris, Berlin, and Rome are marked with their respective weather conditions and temperatures.

Around the world

City	Temp	Wind	Cloud	Weather
London	10	10	10	10
Paris	12	12	12	12
Berlin	11	11	11	11
Rome	13	13	13	13
Madrid	14	14	14	14
Amsterdam	10	10	10	10
Brussels	11	11	11	11
Frankfurt	12	12	12	12
Munich	13	13	13	13
Vienna	14	14	14	14
Warsaw	11	11	11	11
Stockholm	12	12	12	12
Helsinki	13	13	13	13
Toronto	14	14	14	14
New York	15	15	15	15
Los Angeles	16	16	16	16
Hong Kong	17	17	17	17
Singapore	18	18	18	18
Manila	19	19	19	19
Bangkok	20	20	20	20
Seoul	21	21	21	21
Beijing	22	22	22	22
Tokyo	23	23	23	23
Sydney	24	24	24	24
Melbourne	25	25	25	25
Auckland	26	26	26	26
Wellington	27	27	27	27
Dunedin	28	28	28	28
Christchurch	29	29	29	29
Wellington	30	30	30	30
Dunedin	31	31	31	31
Christchurch	32	32	32	32
Wellington	33	33	33	33
Dunedin	34	34	34	34
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Wellington	39	39	39	39
Dunedin	40	40	40	40
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Dunedin	46	46	46	46
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Dunedin	97	97	97	97
Christchurch	98	98	98	98
Wellington	99	99	99	99
Dunedin	100	100	100	100

Continued from page 1. A cold front moving from the north and a warm front from the south, with an occluded front and trough in between. Major cities like London, Paris, Berlin, and Rome are marked with their respective weather conditions and temperatures.

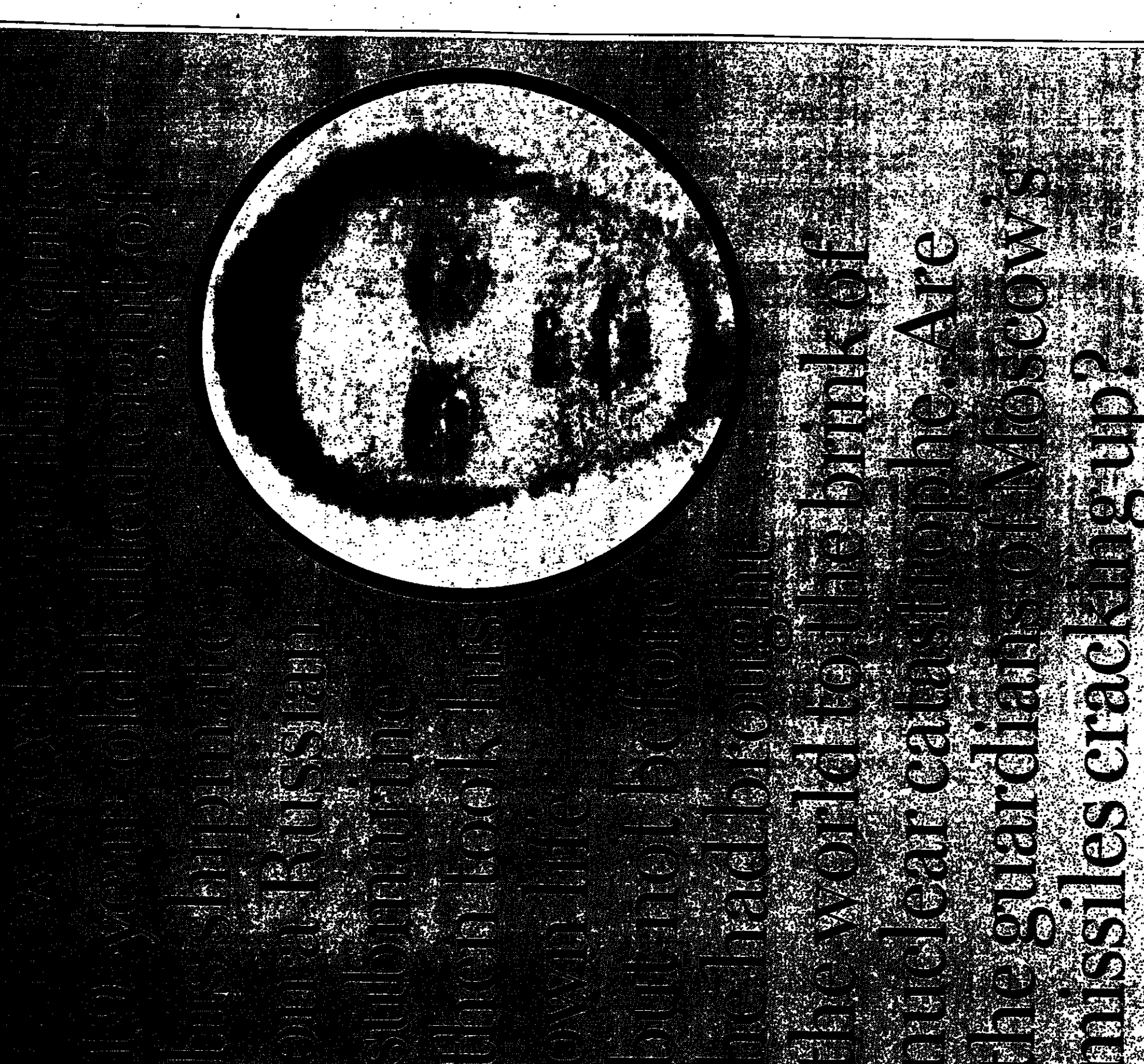
Television and radio

Channel	Time	Program
BBC 1	7.00	News
BBC 1	7.30	News
BBC 1	8.00	News
BBC 1	8.30	News
BBC 1	9.00	News
BBC 1	9.30	News
BBC 1	10.00	News
BBC 1	10.30	News
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Continued from page 1. A cold front moving from the north and a warm front from the south, with an occluded front and trough in between. Major cities like London, Paris, Berlin, and Rome are marked with their respective weather conditions and temperatures.

G2

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How to deal with your child's hateful friends 11

Plus society
Will Central America recover from Hurricane Mitch? With 3 pages of jobs

the world to the brink of nuclear catastrophe. Are the guardians of Moscow's missiles cracking up?

Armed and dangerous

Something strange had certainly happened to the Kuznitskys' 19-year-old son Sasha, a quiet, intelligent boy coming to the end of his national service in the Russian navy — something which had to perhaps be the most alarming episode so far in the saga of the former Soviet's armed forces collapse, one which raises disturbing questions about the nature of the men who watch over the nuclear installations of a puppet state.

Sasha Kuznitskiy was a torpedo specialist on board the nuclear submarine *Barek* (Sov. Leopard), which had just returned from a long deep-ocean patrol. It was moored at a wharf in the garrison settlement of Shalaly, at the mouth of the Ford neck from the Arctic city of Murmansk to the Barents Sea.

A security service officer said, "I would have seen second Chernobyl." The tragedy, said a fresh veteran through Norway, less than 100 miles west of Shalaly. The country has a gnawing fear of the Russian navy's half-second atomic arms dumps, nuclear weapons and radioactive junkyard at the Kola peninsula.

And Norway is not alone. Specialists speak reassuringly of the high level of security and control over Russia's nuclear warheads, concentrated at three dozen sites across European Russia, south Siberia and the Pacific. Yet even if they are right, what of the human factor? As scores of officers at a command institute, mainly in poverty and didst because of unpaid salaries, with monitoring of the mental health of servicemen plummeting, and with a col-

In the early hours of Friday, September 11, Kuzminykh emerged from the submarine and walked onto the quayside carrying a heavy metal

crises. He hurled himself at the sailor on steady duty, manuevered him, and seized his fully-loaded Kalashnikov. He shot at a commander from another submarine who came to investigate, seriously wounding him.

That night the *bars*, which normally carries a crew of 70, had a skeleton watch. Chanting back inside the vessel, Kuzminov cranked the cabin where he worked his crewed layr escape and shot them dead. He marked another two into the *bars*.

● January 28: Conspecto NCO flees the war in Moscow region, accidentally killing a soldier while escaping.

● January 27: Conspecto opens the door for the Russian Pacific Fleet's *Solovki*, killing seven.

● February 27: Two conscripts shot dead in sub-Arctic town of Pechora.

Russians not found.

- **April 25:** Two soldiers on a gunshot in Pusan's Far East, get into shootout after seeing weapons and fleeing.
- **May 12:** Two wounded.
- **May 12:** Border guard killed in shooting accident on the Korean islands off Japan. On same day, in a prison west of Manila, NCO and three conscripts shoot dead their commander, Captain Throckmeyer.
- **June 24:** Four soldiers escape

Sasha Kuznetsov's room at his parents' flat, in Aeroflot's Builders' Street, resembles the rooms of millions of other Russian schoolboys who have grown up and left home — a guitar hanging on the wall, a gold medal for first prize in a city ice hockey tournament, a book of poems by Sergey Yesenin. There seems little about his early life that was remarkable: his father was a tailor-turner, his mother a cleaner. He attended better than average schools and, having been selected to serve in one of Russia's most modern nuclear submarines, should have had a clean educational and medical record.

Neither "screaming" in that unscripted, hysterical way, nor "crying" in that unscripted, hysterical way, in fact, have a history of mental illness (in which case, how did the army let him near a nuclear arsenal?) or the Russian admiralty's reassurances that discipline on board the *Baku* was exemplary were wrong — and Kuzminykh had been provoked.

down, or I'll manage to stand up for myself. Shortly after the killings, his father said, "I reckon he must have endured some terrible punishment for him to have done such a thing."

Violent bullying is chronic in the controls nuclear weapons, selects the most sociologically fit people, but that doesn't mean someone who is ill, or who would become ill as a result of stress, couldn't slip through."

General Mikhail Gerasov, pres-

There was evidence to support the second theory. Not long before the murders, the sailor wrote his parents an old letter, hinting he was having problems with other crew members. The last thing he would say to worry about,"he wrote,"[Silver 17] above all else, I don't want to get mixed up with those fellows who are set upon by half of their own kind."

The sailors' recitals as a new inmate set upon by those of their own kind already re-created out half of their own kind.

have changed the level of young people's health and education sharply downwards. The armed forces simply have nothing to choose from. Not even, from the first time in 80 years

of a crack-up

At the Moscow headquarters of the Soldiers' Mothers Committee, a group which helps women whose husbands are in military trouble, Maria Fedulova took down a folder stuffed with cries for help from anxious fam-

Kuz'minskii airport last night.

● September 21st Soviet Interior Ministry NCO orders his own quartermaster in Chelyabinsk region, near Ufa, Texas, to send other NCOs wounded, two fatally.

● November 1st Colonel in command of Russian bases in Georgia shot dead by volunteer sergeant, Sergeant captured official had "practically" jurisdiction there.

These problems. The navy and the RVSN got the pick of the conscripts, who underwent additional background and mental health checks before being posted to nuclear units. But, even in Soviet times, it is doubtful how effective these checks were. "There's a medical commission," says Captain Gheorgi Kaurava, a former navy anti-aircraft commander. "At every call-up centre, the 9th department of the defence ministry, which

lies to have come to look on their conscription as a two-year prison sentence. She showed the Guardian five cases from the last few months involving soldiers drafted into the RVSN, soldiers who guard intercontinental ballistic missiles.

The case of soldier V. I. Iarnava from my son's letter that, after he got out of hospital and went back to his unit, they beat him again and he had to go to hospital. He was treated

1998: anatomy of a crack-up

- January: Congress (KGO) leaves the north Moscow region, accidentally killing a soldier while stopping.
- January 28: Gromov's troops the end of battles on Russian Pacific island of Sakhalin, killing 200.
- February 27: Two submarines and died in sub-Arctic town of Pechara.
- March: Not found.
- September 11: Gromov to Manchuria, cavalry soldier Alexander Kuzhmin, 19, almost died after sailors and bandits turned themselves to the region of nuclear submarine.
- September 19: Gromov's troops from the submarine.

- April 226: Two sailors on the submarine in Prudhoe Bay, East Greenland, after seizing weapons and fleeing. Four killed and two wounded.
- May 12: Border guard killed in shooting incident on this Kurlin, island, of Japan. On Oshima, Id. in a gulch, west of Alaska, NCO and two conscripted stood close their commander, Captain Timofeyev.
- June 226: Four soldiers escape.
- September 21: Soviet officer Kurzhinov shot himself.
- September 24: Senior lieutenant NCO appears on the town guardhouse in Chelyabinsk, Russia, sent to Uralis. Three other NCOs wounded, two fatally.
- November 21: Colonel in command of Russian base in Oregon shot dead by unknown target. Sergeant can outline different "practically" journalist him.

controls nuclear weapons, selects the most sociobiologically fit people, but that doesn't mean someone who is fit, or who would become ill as a result of stress, couldn't slip through."

General Maklum Gareyev, pres-

the Russian armed forces. There is a tradition of "psychoshocking," handed down with fias and boots from one group of conscripts to another, where the weakest recruit in a new intake are set upon by those who have already served out half of their two-year term. The economic crises have dragged the level of young people's health and education sharply downwards. The armed forces simply have nothing to choose from. Not long ago, from the first intake in 60 years

year term. With the heightening of ethnic consciousness among Russia's minorities, conflicts can acquire an

At the Moscow headquarters of the Soldiers' Mothers Committee, a group of women which helps war-torn soldiers, Maria Martis suddenly broke into tears. She said she had seen her husband, a soldier in the 10th Guards Airborne Division, killed in action. "I was so shocked," she said, "that I couldn't believe it. I thought he was still alive."

ties who have come to look on their sons' conscription as a two-year prison sentence. She showed the *Guardian* five cases from the last few months involving soldiers drafted into the RVSN, soldiers who guard intercontinental ballistic missiles.

The case of soldier V. I. Iarned from my son's platoon that, after he got out of hospital and went back to his unit, they beat him again and he had to go back to hospital. He was treated

THE COMMUNITY HEALTH FOUNDATION

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Applicants are invited from Commonwealth institutions for the position of Director of the Commonwealth Foundation, solely for UK educational/trade missions (204,881 gross including UK benefits Allowance and subject to 'various' income tax for overseas applicants) and/or for the position of Director of the Commonwealth Foundation (204,881 gross including UK benefits Allowance and subject to 'various' income tax for overseas applicants) and/or for the position of Director of the Commonwealth Foundation (204,881 gross including UK benefits Allowance and subject to 'various' income tax for overseas applicants).

The Commonwealth Foundation is a London based inter-governmental organization that supports capacity building and staff training within the non-governmental (NGO) sector of the Commonwealth. The Foundation's work is aimed at the development of the human resources of individual developing countries and the welfare and health of individual developing countries and the welfare and health of individual developing countries.

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- a strong track record in organizational management, and strategic development activities, communication and planning skills;
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Appointments 15

For an information pack, please telephone

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Notice

intended candidates will be contacted by 31 March 1999.

Closing date 15 January 1999.

WORTHING

nomes
LIMITED ... *a new beginning*

Following a successful August ballot, Worthing Homes Ltd. now wish to appoint a Resource Director to help forge this new horizon, initially led from the start-up of the new company, to the completion of the new housing estate in which it is due to transfer in March 1996. It aims to build on the success of the current company, to create an independent, innovative, and community driven organisation with close working partnerships with local organisations.

RESOURCES DIRECTOR


Package
£50k

As a key member of the Senior Management Team you will provide sound financial advice to the Board and be responsible for funding. You will therefore be responsible for setting up and leading the finance and IT teams to control and manage the extensive financial portfolio. As a Director you will be fully involved in the strategic and corporate decision making processes.

Candidates will be experienced accountants and be motivated by the challenge. You should also have substantial commercial experience at senior level in social housing or a similar environment.

Closing Date:
3rd December 1996
Initial Interview:
11th December 1996
Final Interview:
18th December 1996

For an
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or address
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HENRY
ASSOCIATES
Telford
0171 881 7170



LONDON

Senior Public Health Specialist HEALTH AND POPULATION DIVISION

The Department for International Development is responsible for taking forward the strategies and actions set out in the Government White Paper on International Development "Eliminating World Poverty" (November 1997). Given that all health is a major contributor to poverty, the Department has an extensive programme to improve the health of poor people in poor countries. This aims to ensure that people can access reproductive health care, experience lower maternal and child mortality, and suffer much less from the major causes of illness and disability.

DFID therefore has an extensive portfolio of work in the field of public health. Working with multilateral organisations, national governments and other agencies, it seeks to reduce suffering due to malaria and tuberculosis, to eradicate polio, control HIV/AIDS, eliminate lymphatic filariasis, address non-communicable disease, tackle substance abuse issues, and promote better health through improved water, sanitation and environmental intervention. DFID supports the generation of knowledge and processes in these areas, particularly by groups based in poor countries.

As Senior Public Health Specialist, you will report to the Chief Health and Population Adviser and work as a member of the specialist team in the Health and Population Division. You will have a recognised professional qualification in Public Health or the equivalent, at least 6 years' experience in international public health with particular relevance to the needs of poor countries, experience of DFID and partner organisations. You will have an understanding of the particular issues associated with gender, maternal and child health, infectious diseases, childhood, non-communicable disease, nutritional disorders and sexually transmitted infections (STIs). You will be working with the Health and Population Division, particularly the Department of Health, on shared interests with the World Bank, The European Commission and counterparts in other EU Member States. UN funded agencies - including UNICEF - and academic groups and colleges in the UK concerned with international public health issues.

Your duties will include providing advice within the Health and Population Division, and among members of the widely dispersed Health and Population Professional Group within DFID, on day to day public health issues. You will be expected to contribute to strategy papers and provide guidance on aspects of international health and development. You will be expected to provide advice to groups in public health issues - including those concerned with water, sanitation and environmental intervention, child development specialists, economists and educationalists, you will be comfortable exploring ways in which reforming health sectors can best address public health issues.

The post will be based within DFID headquarters, 99 Victoria Street, London. Some travel will be necessary (up to 25% each year), particularly to Asia, Africa and the headquarters of organisations concerned with international health issues.

Salary will be negotiable depending on experience and expertise. Help may be available with the costs of relocation up to a limit of £15,000.

Applicants should either be nationals of the Member States of the European Economic Area (EEA) or Commonwealth citizens who have an established right of abode and work in the United Kingdom.

The contract is for a period of 3 years on Home Civil Service (permanent) terms with the possibility of extension or permanent. Closing date for receipt of completed applications is 2nd December 1998.

For further details and application form please write to: Appointments Office, Ref: AH304/2A/19/G, Abercrombie House, Regent's Park, London NW1 2EX, Glasgow G7 7BE, or Glasgow Ref: AH304/2A/19/G, clearly on your envelope or telephone 01355 643428. E-mail: N-McDonald@dfid.gov.uk or A-McLellan@dfid.gov.uk

DFID is an equal opportunities employer and applications for this post are made from men and women.

DFID

Department for
International
Development

Outstanding

Director of Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Partnership

NORTHLEACH, GLOUCESTERSHIRE UP TO £40,000 + CAR USER ALLOWANCE
(3-5 YEARS FIXED TERM CONTRACT)

At the largest Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, the Cotswolds is a national treasure. Protecting its landscape, enhancing its management and developing a positive relationship with every stakeholder in this unique area is a task that would tax the most able of professionals. We are now looking for an individual of sufficient calibre to rise to such a challenge, as Director of a high-profile project that will shape the Cotswolds AONB into the next century.

Directing the management of our landscape, whilst accommodating the ever-changing needs of the local economy and society at large, you will create and drive strategies in close liaison with local authorities, non-government organisations and the voluntary sector. Promoting a proper understanding of the quality and character that makes the Cotswolds so special, integrating the work of the Partnership at all levels, reviewing and implementing the Management Strategy - and fundamentally guiding strategy and influencing policy - this is a hugely rewarding role at the centre of a progressive organisation.

Extensive strategic, budgetary and people management skills - proven at the highest level - are essential. A communicator, diplomat and hard-core negotiator, you will have the professional background and interpersonal skills to carry your vision through and develop a wide-ranging consensus for the benefit of all who value this priceless part of the national heritage.

To find out more about the role, the rewards and the organisation, please contact Malcolm West, Countryside and Landscapes Manager, Cotswold District Council on (01285) 613643 ext 3540 or Lynn Kettles, Senior Countryside Officer, Countryside Commission on (0117) 973 9966.

For an application form and job description please contact the Personnel Section, Cotswold District Council, Trinity Road, Cirencester, Glos GL7 1PX. Telephone (01285) 613643 ext 3166. Closing date: 2nd December 1998. Interview Dates: 14th & 15th December 1998.

Cotswold DISTRICT COUNCIL

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to rebuild their lives

Phoenix House is a national charity and Registered Social Landlord committed to the care of people overcoming substance use problems.

We are Britain's foremost specialist provider of services to substance misusers, and following a management review, have created a new post, based in Sheffield, of

Regional Operations Manager

£29,525 - £32,748 per annum

The postholder will manage our existing services in Sheffield and

Manchester (Adult Residential Services, Community Services, Outreach Services and Residential Services for families) and develop

new services in the Midlands, Yorkshire and the North West.

Applicants should be experienced, entrepreneurial social care managers, with a relevant professional qualification. They will have to demonstrate knowledge of the field, including the particular concerns of working with families with children who are at risk or are the subject of statutory measures of care, the ability to form positive, productive professional relationships with

commissioners, purchasers and senior care managers is an essential pre-requisite for the post.

For an application form please contact 0171 378 9283 (24 answerphone) or write to Phoenix House Housing Association, 47-49 Borough High Street, London, SE1 1NB quoting the reference R1

The closing date for applications is 1 p.m. on 8 December 1998.

Charity No: 284880

Working Towards Equal Opportunities

Service Manager

Post No: SD021/G

£28,464 - £30,405 pa

Planning & Service Development

We need a high calibre professional to lead a new planning and service development unit. You will have a team of nine people and your job will be to redesign the social care services needed by adults.

Working closely with the Assistant Director, you must have

> three years management experience in a Social Services Department at Team Manager level

> two years experience in a commissioning role in a Social Services Department

> strong communication skills

> in depth knowledge of the current policy agenda for Social Services and Health

> knowledge of methods used in planning

You will, in addition, be required to demonstrate a commitment to developing services appropriate to Leicester's diverse communities.

Closing date 1st December 1998.

Interview date 17th December 1998.

Job Stoppers welcome - no former required. Disabled persons meeting the essential characteristics of the jobs are guaranteed an interview.

Application forms and further details available from The Job Shop, Leicester City Council, New Walk Centre, Leicester LE1 6ZG. email: jobshop@leicester.gov.uk

Personal callers welcome 9.30am - 5.00pm weekdays. Telephone 0116 252 7095 (24hrs) / fax 0116 252 7095. office hours only.

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Pass notes

No 1306

Beverley Goodway



Childhood ambition: To become a doctor.

Actual career: Last heart when his application to Guy's Hospital was rejected. Made a clean breast of it and took up photography.

What kind of photographer? After a stint as a sports photographer, found his niche on the Sun's Page 3. Went on to take most of the 5,000 topless shots printed since the page was conceived, 26 years ago yesterday.

The Sun says: "Lucky fella."

Style: Increasingly sophisticated. He led the Page 3 revolution, from grunting blondes with no tops on to pouting brunettes with no tops on to "personalities in their own right" with no tops on.

Philosophy: States the Sun's belief that Page 3 is a public service.

Services to the public: 1,941 girls, 3,892 boys, "hosts" of household names.

Such as: Page 3 loveses Kathy Lloyd, Kuchi Garter, Donna Ewin, Lloyd, Kuchi Garter, Donna Ewin, Lloyd, Kuchi Garter, Donna Ewin.

And here's some you might have heard of: Sam Fox, Linda Lusvardi, Melinda Messenger.

Admired by: His models, many of whom have publicly commended his professionalism. Jenny Blyth, a former Page 3 girl, compared Goodway to a garage fitter looking at a car (seen on the mechanics rather than the body). Cherry Gilham, one of the earliest models, says he could work miracles with a back light and a wind machine.

Displeased by: The Campaign against Pornography and Censorship. Both tried to get Page 3 banned.

Reasons to be cheerful: Models have made the leap from Page 3 to respectable careers in TV and the music business. Sam Fox called it "an incredible launch pad."

Reasons to be gloomy: See above.

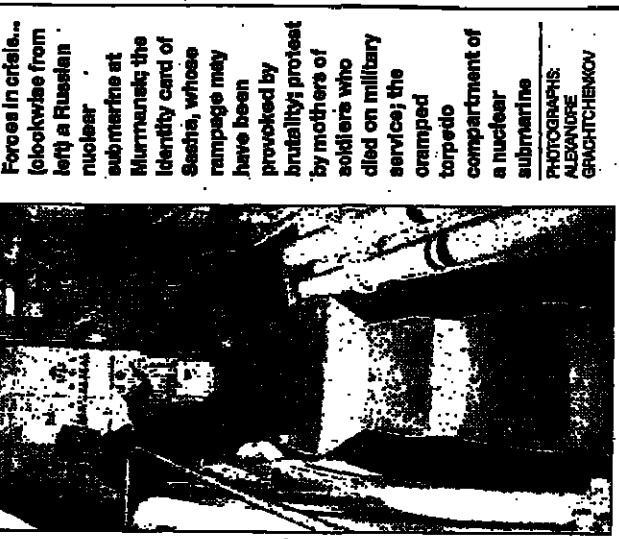
Reasons to be thankful: According to current Page 3 favourite "Tina", putting beautiful girls in the paper gives women readers something to aspire to. Around 1,500 send their pictures in each year, 30 make it onto Page 3.

What statistics Models earned £235 a session in 1970 and had an average bust size of 35C. They were about 19 years old. These days they earn £260, have downsized to 34B and are nearer 22 years old.

Do say: "Who needs stuck up supermodels when you've got the Sun's salt of the earth Girls for the Thrillumentum?"

Don't say: "They're not even pretty." Not to be confused with The Beverly Sisters, Beverly Hills 90210, Beverly Craven.

Full Pass Notes archive at: <http://passnotes.guardian.co.uk>



Forces in crisis... (above) from left a Russian nuclear submarine at Murmansk; the identity card of a sailor, whose rampage may have been provoked by brutality of soldiers who died on military service; the cramped torpedo compartment of a nuclear submarine. PHOTOGRAPHS: ALEXANDER SHORCH/REUTERS



sionally shooting each other, what about the psychological state of the officers and NCOs themselves?

"What disturbs us is the state of the officers," said Pedolov, of Soldiers' Mothers. "The phenomenon of mass brutality in the ranks shows that they're not in control of themselves. About 200 officers have killed themselves this year."

The current defence minister, Igor Sergeev, has staggeringly little money to work with. The amount of cash the Russian military is currently receiving to sustain 1.2 million men, is about £124 million a month - considerably less than Denmark, which offers Nato all of 33,000 troops and has no nuclear weapons.

"It's a bitter business," says Captain Kauron. "Take the submarines. When they don't pay you and you go to sea, it's not clear how your family will get by without you. It's terrible."

For a day and a night the country was on the brink of nuclear catastrophe. It would have been a second Chernobyl.

Russian specialists rubbish the notion that hungry, angry, suicidal officers might be able to detonate, launch or steal nuclear weapons. But Admiral Alexei Ovtchinnikov told the Guardian: "A single person couldn't do anything with a ballistic missile on board a submarine. It's placed in a secure container, and can't be damaged, let alone launched."

But as long as the armed forces remain in their present state, doubts will remain. "The scenario of crazed conscripts and suicidal officers - or simply bored, undertrained servicemen - watching over indestructible weapons of mass destruction sounds anything but stable. Who is watching the watchers for signs of trouble?"

The Bure incident, and pressure from a Russian public hostile to the draft, is pushing the military to take action. Some 12,000 conscripts in the Moscow military district were recently subjected to repeat examinations, resulting in more than 100 being sent home, including 30 with mental problems. But until the Russian military is shrunk to a more manageable size - one the country can at least afford - parents like Sergei Kuzminykh are going to be left with their heads in their hands. "He was a quiet lad," he said of his son. "He never offended anyone. If someone offended him, well, he would do something about it."

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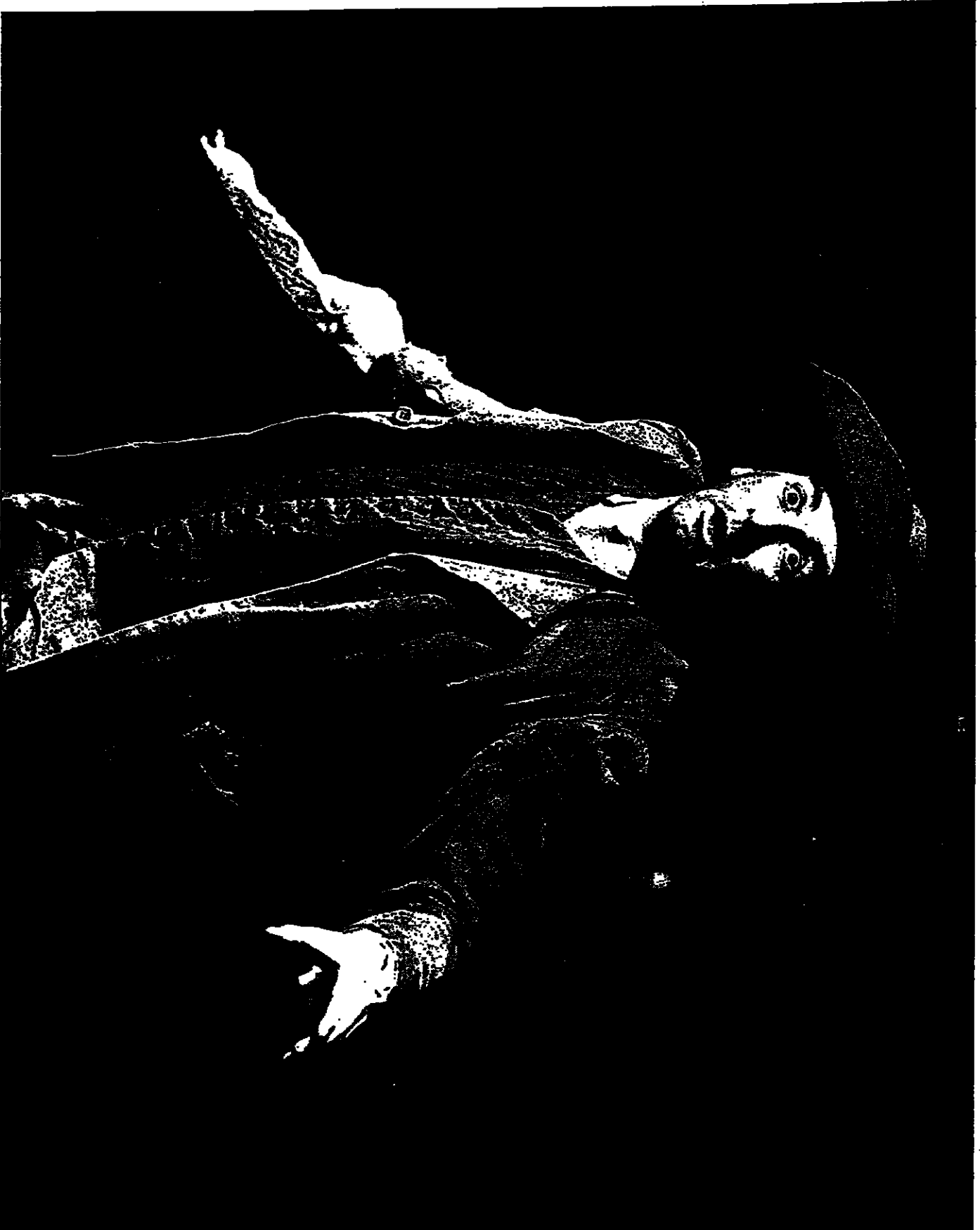
LEADER PHOTO: I that for 40 years.

Arts Theatre



Stephen Rae has taken time off filming to direct a play about one man's struggle for a united Ireland — two centuries ago. **Michael Billington** discovers some very modern parallels

He had a dream



History, said Joyce's Stephen Dedalus, is a nightmare from which I am trying to escape. But may it not also offer lessons from which we can learn? The brilliance of Stewart Parker's Northern Star, revived by Stephen Rae for this year's Belfast Festival, is that it embraces both possibilities: it sees history, depending on your perspective, as a hazy prison and a potent metaphor.

Rae's revival, for Timberbox Theatre Company and Field Day, could hardly be better timed or placed. Parker's play, premiered in 1984, deals with the United Irishmen's abortive uprising of 1798 in particular with the fate of the leading Presbyterian radical Henry Joy McCracken, who was hanged by the British. In its vision of Protestant and Catholic finding a common cause ("There is strength in union, weakness in dissent," cried McCracken, sounding not unlike John Donne), the play has a burning relevance at a time when the Belfast Agreement is hanging by a thread. It is also being staged in the beautiful, elliptical First Presbyterian Church in Belfast's Rosemary Street — not only the starting point for the play but the hub of the radical culture it describes. Short of seeing Hamlet at Stratford, you could hardly find a play that comes closer to home.

But the wit of Parker's play lies in its dazzling Joycean structure. It shows McCracken, after the defeat at Artrim, hiding away with his mistress and their child in a ruined cottage outside Belfast. In his final hours McCracken surveys the Seven Ages, of both his own life and the attempt to forge a united Ireland, in the style of famous Irish playwrights ranging from Sheridan and Boucicault to Beckett and Beckett.

But what is the point of Parker's astute act of ventriloquism? Partly, I suspect, after virtuosic delight: he was always a writer who headed off our issues critically, and here he seems to relish parodying everything from the ingenious parables of Wilde ("For appearances sake to provoke a quarrel with me — I do hope it will lead to violence") to the lamentary rhetoric of Synge ("But I

Every Thursday in the Europe
The Guardian
online

there a kind of glory visting up amongst us?"). But there is also clearly a serious purpose behind the literary device — to suggest that Ireland can achieve unity only by acknowledging its place in the hub of the radical culture it describes. Short of seeing Hamlet at Stratford, you could hardly find a play that comes closer to home.

In the end, this is very much a play about history. Parker sees 1798 as a national turning point — a moment when there was a dream, however broken or ill-fated, of a united Ireland. But he also warns against the dangers of sentimentalising or misremembering the past. Roy Foster, historian and Yeats biographer, has written that the 1798 rebellion revealed widespread, cross-cultural alienation but generally "the radical alliance that had attempted to combine so many disparate elements split apart in confusion" — precisely the point made by Parker in both a hilarious O'Casey-esque scene of comic dialogue between Catholic defender and Presbyterian, and a sombre, Jean-Paul Sartrean condemnation of the episode of nationalist martyrdom.

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Hot

Love Upon The Throne
National Theatre of Brent hit the West End with their hilarious take on the true story of Charles and Di. Comedy Theatre, London W1 (0171-3688 1731), till January.

The whole history of Ireland is a civil war — left, Sean Connolly in Northern Star; far left, Christopher Crooks and Ann Derringer in getting The Picture MAISON PHOTOGRAPH: PHIL SMITH

House
Includes 18th-century Huddersfield colleges, poet Simon Armitage has created a world where everything is inspected, including the audience. Comedy Theatre, London W1 (0171-3688 1731), till December 6.

Sail Out
Francis Aspinall's best work yet uses body language to show the powerplay between a group of friends. Leeds Metro on Wednesday and Thursday (01203 524624), till Saturday.

A Clockwork Orange
The definitive stage version of Burgess's novel. A seamless blend of music and movement, film and performance from Northern Sings. Warwick Arts Centre (01203 524624), till Saturday.

How many times can an actor be discovered? Jim Norton, star of the smash hit *The Weir*, is now on his eighth. **Breakthrough? He talks to Rory Carroll**

Overnight excess

Jim Norton has recently exploded on to the West End, delivering a performance so sublime that to watch it is to experience that rarest of theatrical events — perfection. But while Connor McPheerson's play *The Weir* makes the most of Norton's face and voice, many people are still more familiar with his bottom. Norton's rump helped carry millions of viewers between the second and third series of the Channel 4 sitcom *Father Ted*. In a cliff-hanger that thrilled anything found in the soap, Norton played Bishop Brennan, the terror of Craggy Island, expelling his posterior while Ted attempted up the courage to kick it. That moment of vulnerability earned Norton a place in British comedy history.

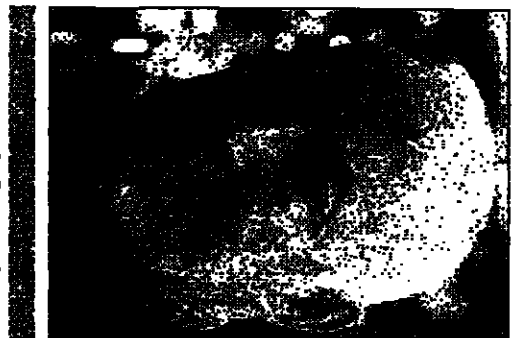
The audience that spill out of the Royal Court (underwritten by Norton's performance in *The Weir*) could be excused for considering this a travesty. Could there be a worse indignity? Well, yes actually. Rabbit pie, in another scene, Bishop Brennan wakes up in bed surrounded by dozens of white rabbits. They were a subplot, but their loss of bladder control wasn't in the script.

"You could hear Jim's voice screaming down the corridors of 117V," says Graham Linehan, the sitcom co-writer. "But we understood. Rabbit pie is one of the world's top 10 smells."

Norton strugs when asked if the recent being famous primarily for Father Ted. The show was fun, it was a job. It was a hit. Besides, he learned long ago to accept the capriciousness of an actor's life.

Reviews for *The Weir* have been phenomenal. Set in a bar in a remote part of Ireland, the play features four locals trying for the attention of a female newcomer by telling ghost stories. She turns the tables on them by telling a devastating story of her own.

The exploration of love, loss and loneliness is a ton de force by the young writer McPheerson. Breathless adjectives have hailed director Ian Rickson and the cast, but genuine astonishment has greeted Norton's portrayal of Jack, a back-



Norton (above) was once peed on by rabbits. You could hear the screams for miles

Norton doesn't resemble a giant of the stage. Around 6ft 7in, silver hair, wispy across his head, he wears a black, blue shirt and a white tie. He has four-day stubble, which his wife hates but is necessary for Jack's character.

Decades in London and America, though he returns often, "I don't mind when people come up and ask me about Father Ted, thinking it's the only thing I've done. It's better than being ignored."

Peters says that, notwithstanding earlier successes, *The Weir* is Norton's finest hour. "This was the part he's trained all his life for," says Michael Colgan, director of Dublin's Gate Theatre.

Colgan is not alone in believing that Norton's preparation for *The Weir* began the moment he left school to work in radio. Playing Handberry Pann, Irishman and thug all in the same week, trained his voice and gave him a thousand accents.

If Norton regrets success coming so late in his career, he doesn't allow it. "I don't feel in any way jaded," he says. "I've never been out of work. When I

K

Hague rebu
in battle over